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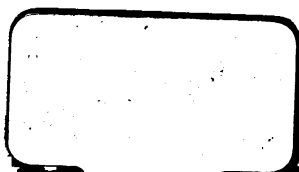
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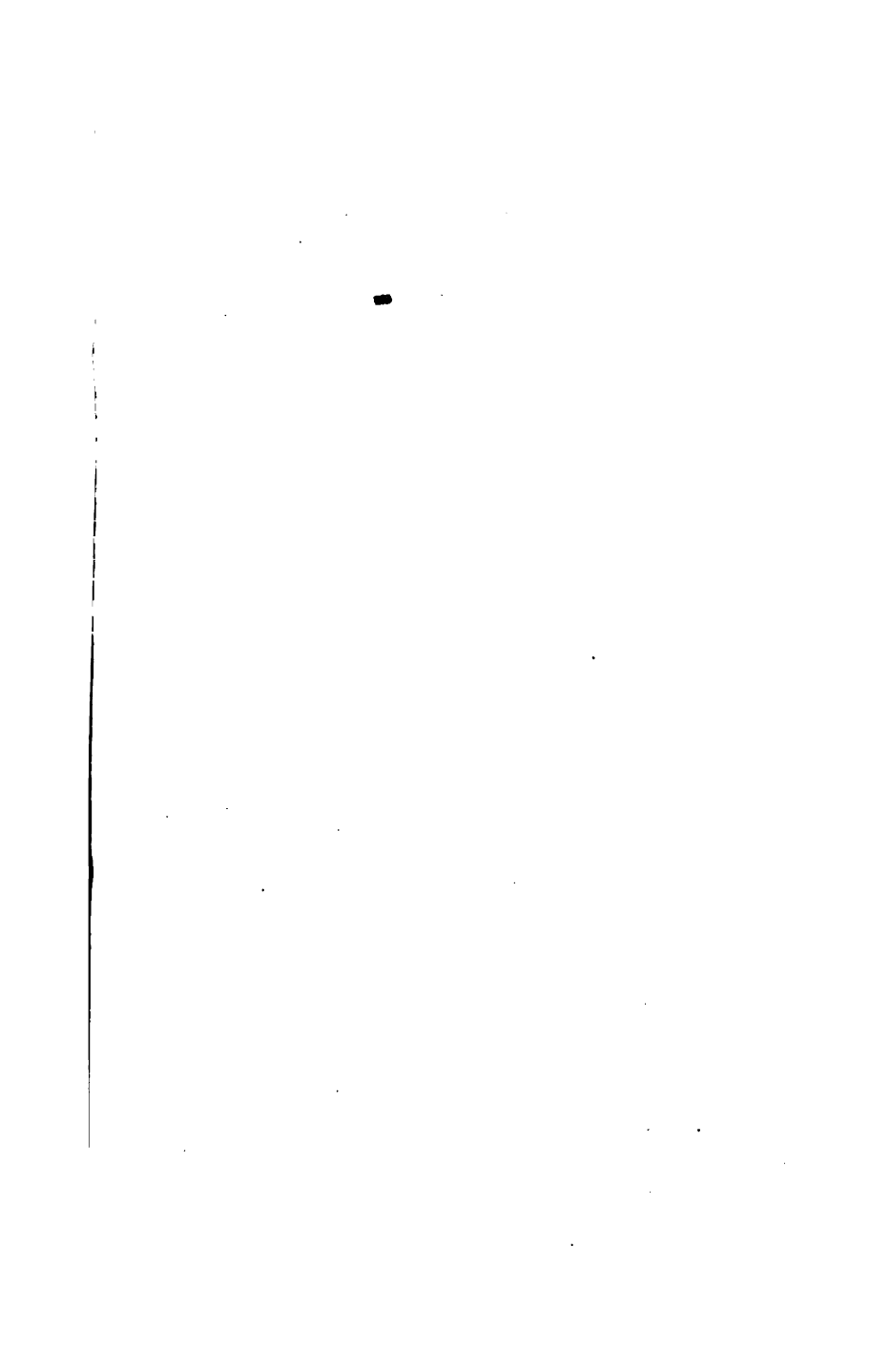
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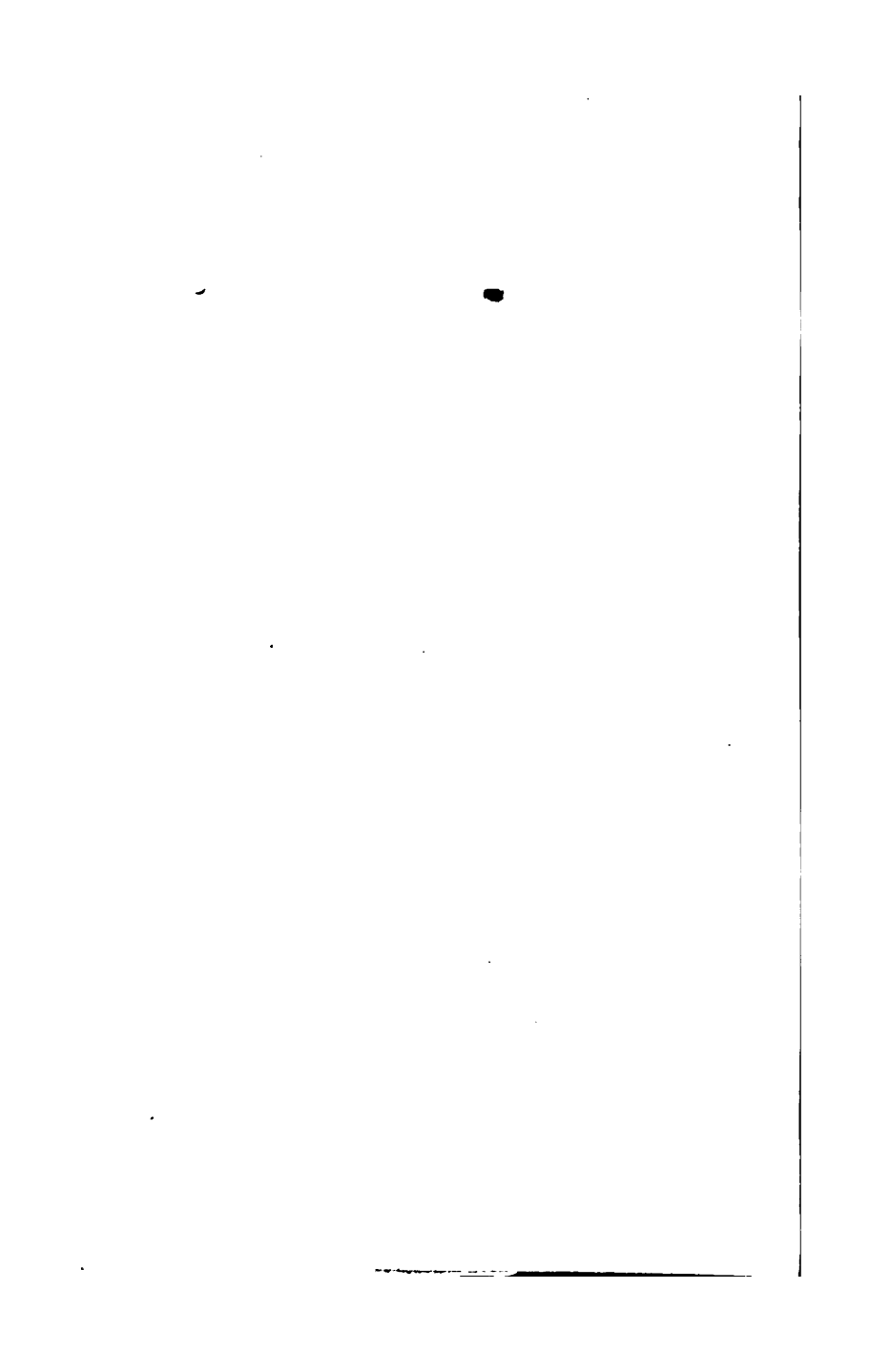
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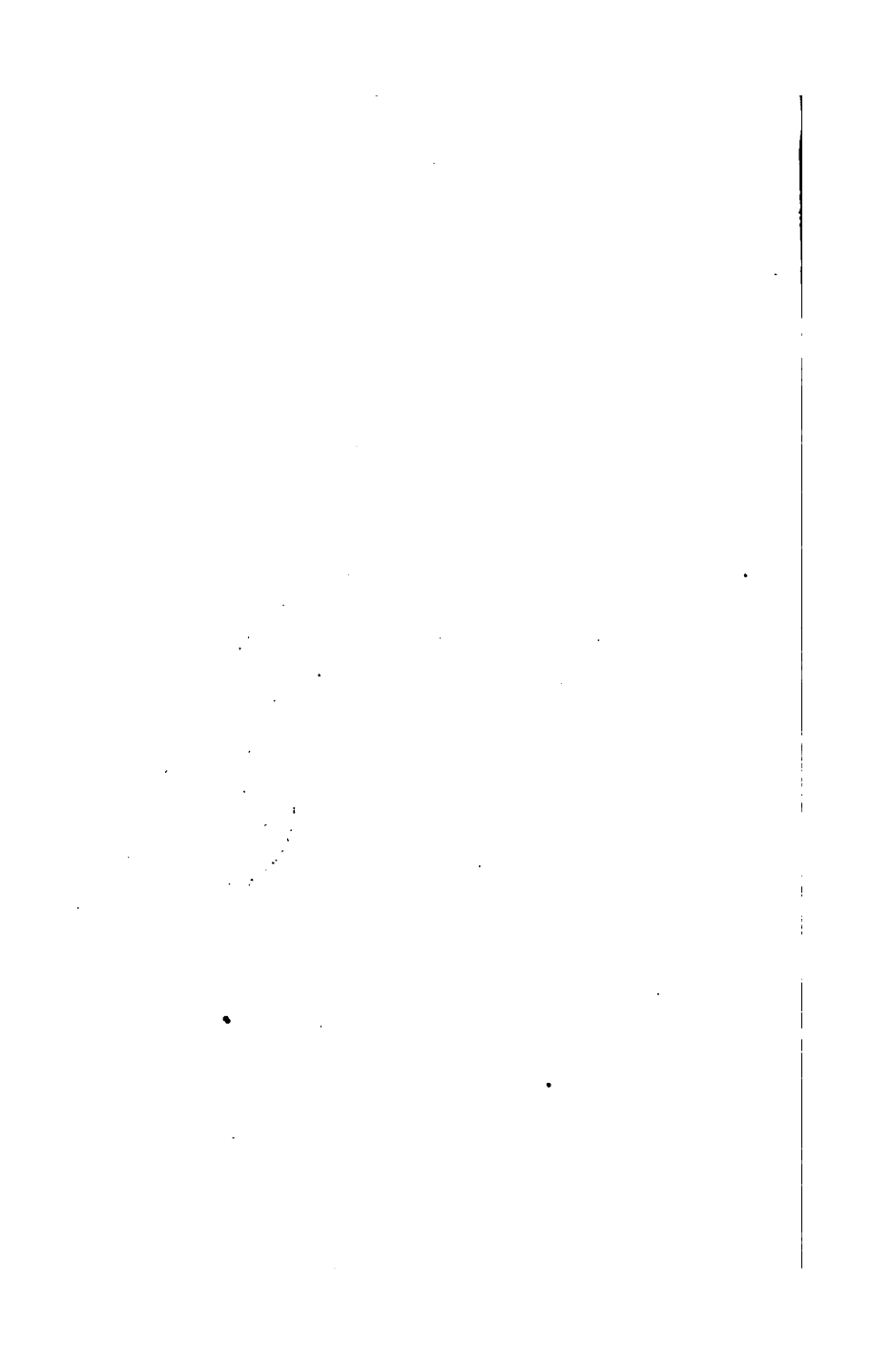






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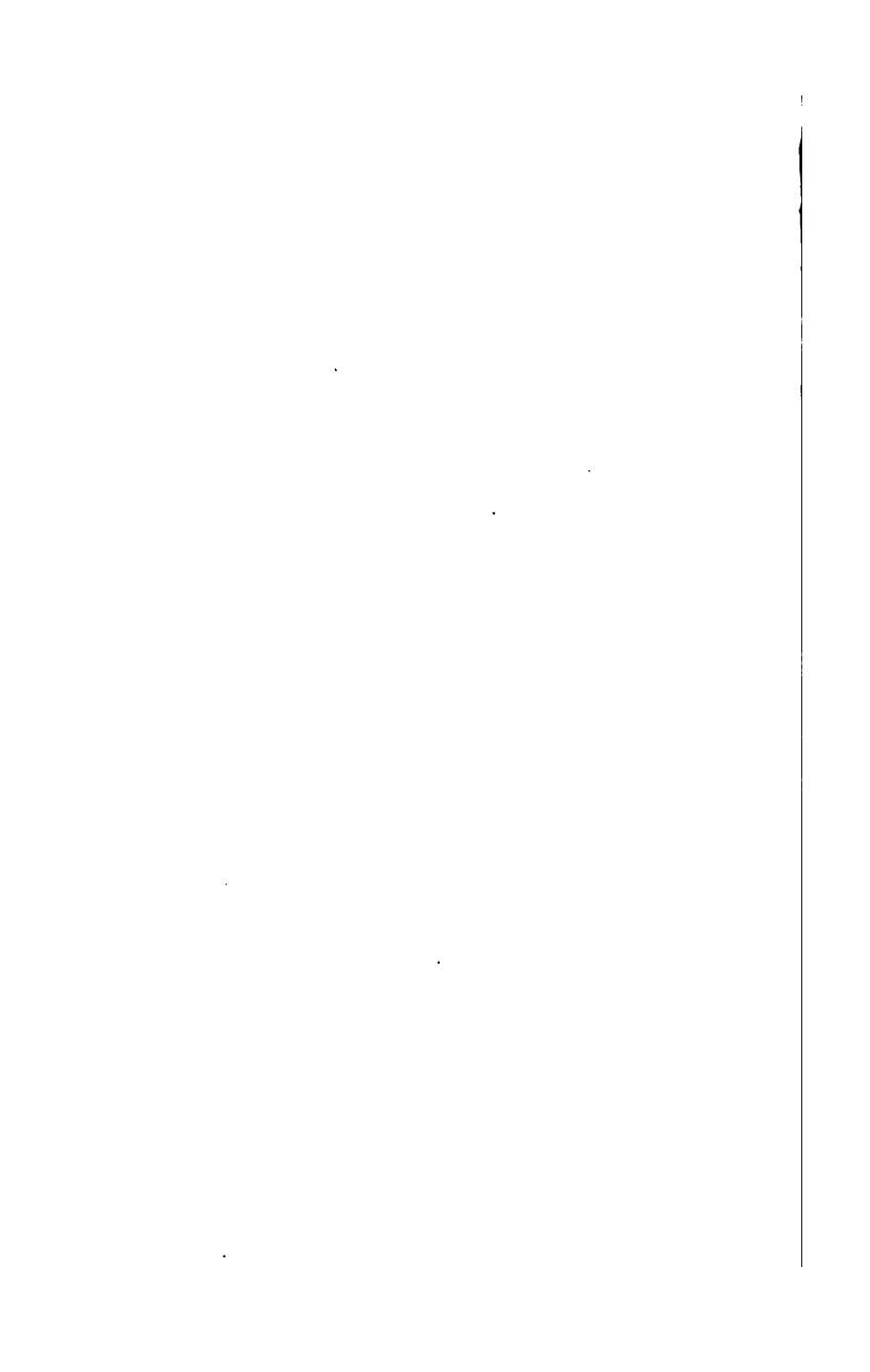
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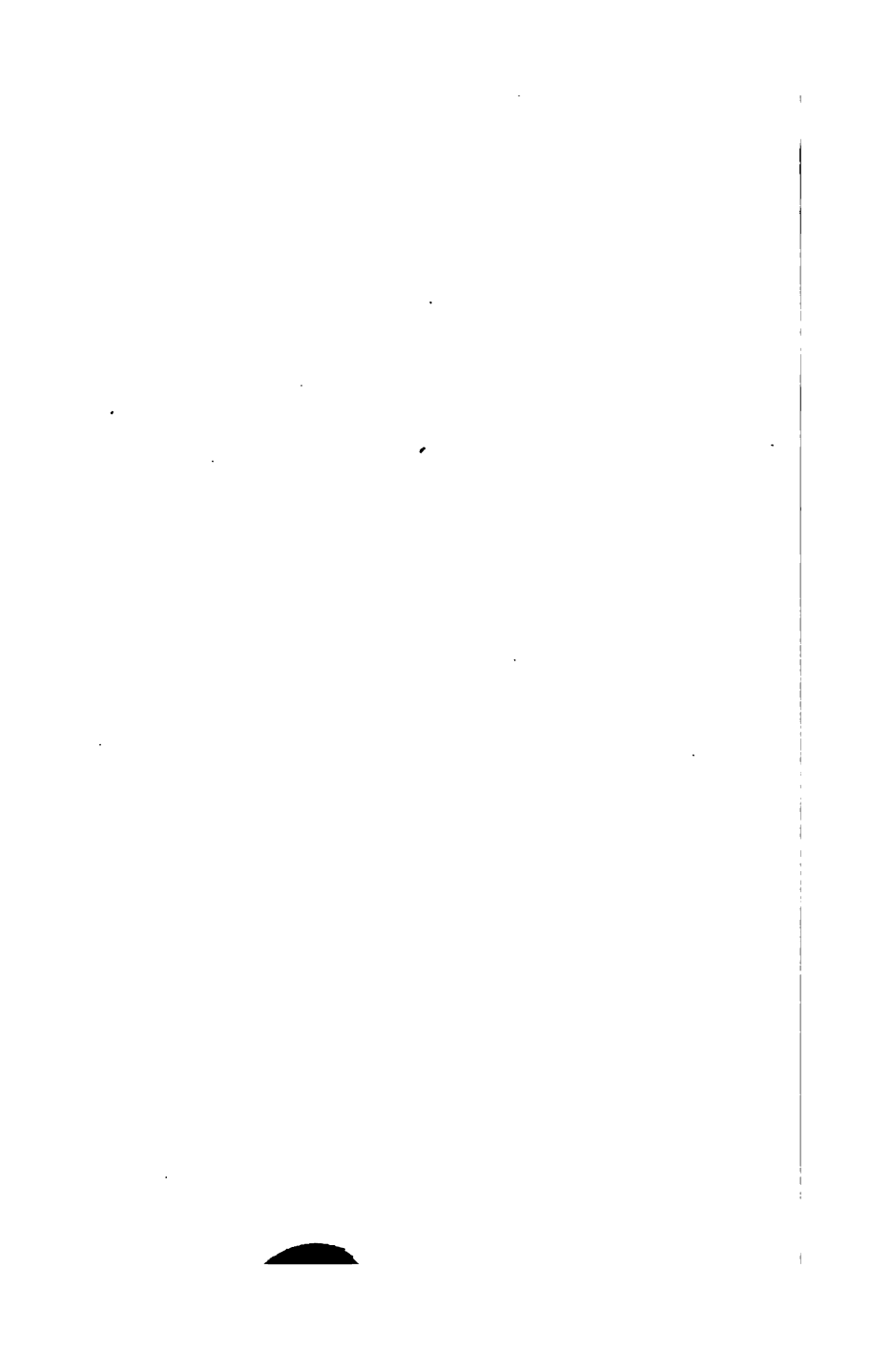


LONDON:
THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON;
DUBLIN, AND DERBY.
NEW YORK: HENRY H. RICHARDSON AND CO.
MDCCLXX.

250. c. 383.



TO
A TRUE PATRIOT,
AN HONEST MAN AND A GOOD FATHER,
THIS
TALE OF A TRANSITION TIME
IS,
WITH LOVE AND REVERENCE,
INSCRIBED BY
THE WRITERS.



IN *re* GARLAND.

CHAPTER I.

Suddenly, one sultry morning, the still life of Farrenstown was broken by a great man dropped there from the Dublin coach. Excitement spread over town and country, in widening circle, here green, there blue-tinged, till one sunshiny little ripple of it reached the quiet cottage of farmer Connor Kennedy.

The following day the farmer discovered that he had business into town; and as the clock would have struck eight, had the clockmaker been that way, he was sitting to breakfast in preparation for the road. Mrs. Kennedy was superintending him: refilling his basin, floating a *sthoul* of cream over the ropy thick milk of every day use; dusting his Sunday coat from the feathers that caught it in the room; turning a pair of clean stockings in readiness for putting on; meantime postponing her own meal, and, for aught I know, purposing on his departure to comfort herself with a cup of tea.

"An' who 'ill you vote for, Connor?" she asked, as she stood fingering his stockings on the other side of the table fronting him.

"Who 'ill I vote for?" repeated Connor.

"Didn't Mr. Garland send his compliments about it to you yestherday?"

"Sure enough he did. But I didn't know that you were hearing to it; you didn't tell me iv it."

"O, I can hear, an' see, an' say nothing now an' again. There's wan thing certain, I won't vote for him or his."

"I know nothing iv either iv 'em, but what the priest said o' Sunday."

"I'm not so," said Connor. "I know a thrifle more o' the chap they're thrying to put in to do their dirty work for 'em. An' divil from me—an' I'll keep my word—if they'll get me to help 'em!"

"Well, an' suppose Mr. Garland keeps his word, too?"

"Let him! But I tell you he won't."

"God send it!" said Mrs. Kennedy. "For, indeed, Connor, it 'ouldn't be very pleasant; faix it 'ouldn't."

"Pleasant or onpleasant," Connor said, pausing as he drew on one stocking, "we must take our chance. How do I know but the Lord left me 'ithout children that I might be able to act independent, an' show a good example? We have nobody looking to us but ourselves; an' you took me for better for worse, ma colleen dhas! an' you must go through elections an' all with me. You 'ouldn't have me—"

"I would not, God knows!"

"That's the way to say it!" returned Connor, rising. "Am I plasing to ye now, Ma'am?" he continued, throwing off his seriousness as he put on his coat, shook himself and, first standing bolt upright, made his wife a scrape of a bow. Mrs.

Kennedy acknowledged the salute in kindred style. "You'll see that I'll come back safe an' sound in body an' soul—an' stocking, too," he added, making a movement with his hand, as though clinking the old guineas sometimes kept in such receptacle. His wife followed him to the door.

"'Pon your conscience, now," he said, stopping and turning round, "which 'ould you rather I'd come home with, a bribe or a broken head to you?"

"Go on about your business, now," said Mrs. Kennedy.

"Well, they 'ont be at the voting till to-morrow; so I'm safe, anyhow, to-day," Connor said, laughing, as he shortened his stick and set off in good earnest.

He stepped on under the sunshine that was favouring the crops; the odour of the furze-blossom from his own hedges overtaking him on the fresh forenoon air. And he thought, with thankful heart, over his position: his rent paid in, and more than enough to meet the running-gale laid up in bank with many year's interest thereon. His spirit rose. There was in his determination—should the worst come to the worst—just that sense of sacrifice that makes a man feel himself more manly whilst bidding defiance to oppression. His landlord could, of course, upon certain penal clauses of the lease, put him out of his farm, the farm that he had married and been ten years happy on. It would cost him a pang; but he should and would get over it—"there are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught." And, as Connor, by foot, drew near Farrenstown, he was

by hand carting off his goods and chattels to a farm that he often had cast an understanding eye upon, and which rumour, recently, had advertised "to be let to a solvent tenant." He knew the while, however, that he was very little likely to be dispossessed. He argued with himself that "though Mr. Garland would like to decree the colour of his politics, he still bettther liked to see the colour of his money. That he couldn't bettther himself in a tenant." For Connor owed his being so well to do simply to his having so few claims on him beside the landlord's. And so, he shrewdly concluded, "that the landlord would let him alone;" as, taking one thing with another, it was his interest to do.

Connor reached Farrenstown by ten o'clock. Yet the streets were in full meridian bustle; each party everywhere giving and taking noisy pledges of its certainty to carry the day, and of its greater glory therefrom because of the contest's promising to be a close one.

It happened that this struggle was of a remarkable character; if, indeed, anything can be said to be so in our dear country of contradictories. The one candidate was a native of a distant county, a well-known liberal-minded Protestant, whose own good deeds were root and branches of his pedigree, and whose property qualification was very possibly a fiction—if the only one put forward for or by him. The other was a local magnate, "high as Gilderoy," but of that despised caste that our folk style expressively, "an Orange-Papist." Thus it was that at the hustings both candidates raised the cry of "green." And each party, add-

ing many illustrative epithets, accused the other of using it surreptitiously.

As Connor crossed the bridge, a loose-looking fellow of the half gipsy calling of rabbit-catcher, &c. was shambling along the main street, a crooked sixpence in the opened palm of his outstretched hand. He was electioneering after his own fashion.

"Orange won't win! Green will! Bet you sixpence of it?"

"Come," said a landlady, as he diverged to the footway with a seeming intent to dart into her house, "you won't get any dhrunker than you are here, Billix."

"I nùver got dhrunk," rejoined Billix. "Whin-ever I dhrank a dhrop at all 'twas in your house, Ma'am. I nùver got dhrunk in me life: bet you sixpence I didn't. Good morrow! (to a policeman coming up.) O! your silence gives consent."

"Let him pass to-day, constable," said a well-dressed townsman, walking by.

"Will you explain to me," cried Billix, extending his other arm to bar the passage of this person, "what do they want!—what do they want o' bringing this man here at all, at all? He is a sthranger. If I wanted to borrow a pot, is it to Longford I'd go for it? No; but next doore. An' says Lord Castlehay, (aside) that's Farren-Browne—says he to me, 'Billix,' says he, 'if you wanted rabbits where 'ould you go for 'em but to the ould stock?' That's the way to say it or not to say it at all."

Getting tipsier as he talked, Billix went, darting

sideways, off to spread his sentiments elsewhere. And Connor, who had stood to listen and laugh, walked on his own sober way.

CHAPTER II.

When the farmer had his little bit of business done, and was thinking about going home, he was encountered by a gang of the retainers of Orange, headed by his landlord's driver, and greeted heartily with voice and hand; in fact, seized and taken possession of, politics notwithstanding.

"Give us your fist, Connor Kennedy!" cried the driver, "though you won't give us your vote, may be."

"You may say that!" rejoined Connor.

"Well, sure we're neighbours an' friends, whatever we're for: town or counthry, Whig or Tory."

"Fish or flesh, priest or parson," added Connor, laughing, to the bystanders. For the group already was surrounded, at a respectful distance, by idlers, or properly, by non-electors, whose business was to see that *their* representatives, the electors, did their duty.

"Have your joke, man," responded the other. "But the divil a much aither iv 'em ever did for you or me, Connor. Come in an' have a glass, just to show you're not bittther agin your neighbours. Let the mimbers fight it out themselves—divil a good in our falling out about it. Come along, boys."

"Some other time, Tim," said Connor, diplomatically insinuating his shoulder from under the hand laid on it. But he already stood beside the public-house door, having suffered himself to be borne on with the others who showed their ready-and-willingness to follow their leader in that direction.

"What I'm going to give you how 'ill you have it?" demanded Tim Fleming, the driver.

"Well, 'kiss a rogue an' be rid of him,' here goes!" said Connor, good-humouredly, and in he went.

This licensed establishment was, truly, chartered for the Orange committee; but, as many a man, a friend to the house, elector and non-elect, needs must have recourse to it as usual, there was no sign of disaffection to his colour in Connor's going there to take a treat. The party, five in number, sat down.

"The native here!" called Tim Fleming, to the landlord; "there's nothing like it, after all."

A round was brought, accordingly, and served out.

"I tell you what, Connor," said his entertainer, "whisper here; many an honest fellow took a dhrop at both sides."

"I'm taking this from you, an' not from either side," replied Connor.

"So sign 'tis to my score 'twill be: an' another to the back iv it," Fleming said, rapping on the table with the emptied vessel.

As it would not be in good taste to bar the rest of the company from fully enjoying the treat, Connor contented himself with making the ex-

pressive movement of covering his own glass with his hand.

"Here," the landlord said, re-entering quart in hand, "when you've that dhrained call out for more. There's too many outside to be counting round with ye. I'll know be the measure what ye lave, if ye lave any.

This last sentence was delivered with a nod and a wink: the wink at Connor, the nod towards a tall, thin, red-faced, one-armed pensioner, one of the five, who, as he sat bolt upright, seemed deeply and fiercely intent on something beyond what passed around him. "*He'd dhrink goravuch,*"* whispered the landlord, as he repassed Connor.

"I tell you what, boys," said the driver, tasting his second glass, "that's good; (after a sip) mtha! mtha! good it is!"

And Connor's glass was refilled, his urbanity getting the better of him; the landlord yet being in the doorway talking with some one.

"Indeed it is," Connor said, tasting his bumper.

"I hear a dale o' Walker an' the ould whiskey long ago," pursued Tim Fleming, "but, be the powers, I think that's as good as any iv 'em. 'Tis as good as I'd wish for, any how. Whin I was up the counthry I used get a taste o' Dublin spirits. Pfthat! fit for ladies—if they'd dhrink the like at all. Egor, I'd like the spunk in the little ddrop I'd take, to know it wasn't new milk."

* In the neighbourhood of the City of Cork is a farm so called, the some-time tenant of which "drank himself out of house and home;" hence the local phrase "to dhrink goravuch."

"You needn't desire betther than that," Connor said, politely.

"Here's to the good cause—whichever it is!" said Tim Fleming, taking a deep dip in his glass.

"I'm sorry you're going agin us, Connor. There's nothing like the ould stock: whatever nicknames a man's inimies may give him, I wouldn't mind 'em."

"'Tis the name your man is giving himself, I mind," returned Connor.

"May be you 'ouldn't vote for the other side aither?" said the driver.

"That I mightn't go home if I don't!" Connor said, hastily, and finishing his glass to seal the pledge, or drown the curse.

"God forbid that you shouldn't get home, in good time! 'Twould be a sad day for the woman that owns you if you didn't. Here's to her health, an' an increase to the family!"

This was a toast not to be refused. And to show that he did not relish it the less for the jest—a standing joke against him—coupled with it, Connor drained the fresh bumper.

"Here's to meself, now—for want o' betther, and long life to me!" cried Fleming, after awhile. "Dhrain your glasses now, for ye'll get no more."

The toast was drunk. And so, after a good deal more talk, the party arose and quitted the house; and one by one, as business or pleasure led, parted Connor wishing him a pleasant walk.

CHAPTER III.

A walk just then was pleasanter in word than deed. It was three o'clock, the sun at its hottest; and a long stretch of road without a hundred yards of shade, lay between Farrenstown and Connor's farm. He had proceeded a half mile or so, far enough to feel the luxury of a lift, when a butt, with a most inviting looking han'ful of straw in it, was driven past him.

"Will you take a sate, Mr. Kennedy?" enquired the guide, drawing up.

"'Tis a friend would ask me," answered Connor. "I declare to you I was just wishing to meet some one neighbourly enough to make me—"

"Pull the sthraw hether to you," interposed the guide.

"—such an offer. Begor, 'tis very hot, very hot intirely."

Taking off his hat, Connor wiped his forehead. Then slanting himself, so as to be shaded by the guide, who sat on the front edge of the butt, he settled himself down in enjoyment of all the advantages of this god-send. In a very short time, whilst picturing the comfort of being set down at his own door and in due time for dinner, he fell fast asleep. The jolting of the butt served cradlewise to deepen and prolong his rest. When he awoke, considerably later than the hour to which he had looked forward, he was in course of being lifted gently, but amidst much laughter, by four strong young men.

"Let me get out meself," he said, "sure 'tishn't dhrunk ye think I am?"

"Let him," said one of the four.

Connor tried; but, tied hand and foot, the attempt only served to renew the merriment of the four companions.

"Where am I?" he asked, "an' what's this for?"

"You're just here, Mr. Kennedy," said the guide. "An' these little spancils are only to keep ye here awhile on a visit to a friend or two that didn't like how you were going on in town."

"O, you threacherous bla'guard!" cried Connor. Yet he could not himself help laughing. Then he said suddenly: "For God's sake, boys, let me go! me wife 'ill be frightened out of her life."

"O, she knows where you are," said one of the young men, as they again took him up to set him on his feet, "or at laste she knows where you are not. She knows you're not in town. An' she knows you're not in the way o' mischief; an' be the law iv arms, and that's the law here now, Connor—that's more than every woman knows of her husband when he's out from her: but I impressed that on her particularly."

Connor was now inclined to stand still and sulk, but found it was of no use to try.

"There's company inside on the same invitation as yourself," said one of his friends, as, to avoid being carried lady-out-of-town, he hopped towards the cottage destined for the place of his visit.

"Mr. Kennedy, gentlemen!" The gentlemen, some other green voters, laughed at Connor till he

was fain to laugh again at himself and over a very good dinner. Punch or whiskey, however, he would not touch; being determined, as he himself said, "to keep what brains was left him." Otherwise he enjoyed himself pretty well. And when a pack of cards was unpocketed by one of the confederates, he very willingly renewed his parole, "not to put a hand to his feet," and, left unbound so far, he joined in a game of five-and-forty.

The night's amusement over, he cheerfully submitted his hands to the spancils again; if only in order to be able to say, that he *could not* be at the hustings.

This day and the three following passed sleepily and wearily enough. Late in the evening of the fourth, a messenger brought tidings that Orange had resigned. The strength of the popular party in the county had, as it proved, been underrated by the other side. And when, in the afternoon of the fourth day's polling, it was seen that Green was in a strong majority, and with outlying baronies, known to be greenest of the green, yet unpolled, Mr. Orange, whose expenditure per day required four figures to count, withdrew in high dudgeon; not pleased with his first experience of a contested election. Connor, after a moment's chagrin at not having been missed or needed in the struggle for which he had braced himself, grew very merry at the news: huzzaed "green for ever!" kicked his hat for "more power to the new member!" spent another social night at the cost of the beaten candidate, for sake of the victory, and returned for an early breakfast to his wondering wife.

"'Twasn't a bad joke, ma colleen dhas," he

said, "as I wasn't wanted. But, another time, you may take my word, I'll be a match for 'em."

CHAPTER IV.

Early one morning of the following spring, when the cold grey dawn barely revealed a cold grey frost, a young woman wearing the traditional Irish cloak (a specimen of which soon will be as scarce as one of the Irish wolf-dog), the hood drawn over her face and the lower part wrapped beneath her folded arms, was traversing the high road by which Connor Kennedy had walked to Farrenstown, and which led those who, like the present wayfarer, turned their backs on that *multum in parvo* of commerce, towards the mansion of Connor's landlord, "Richard Garland, Esq., of Cuil-raike." This same road passed, too, hard by another dwelling, pleasantly lying on the low hill-side fronting Squire Garland's gate, on which the thoughts of this poor wayfarer were turned; a dwelling which, inferior as it was not merely to the Squire's, but to that of his best tenant, seemed to her almost despairing eyes a refuge happy and unattainable as heaven. For in that chilled and hardened mood of mind and heart, which is the first effect of human severity on human nature, Heaven and home seemed to this unhappy girl alike shut against her by that which was lamented rather than as yet verily repented of.

When within a quarter of a mile or so of

Connor Kennedy's *borheen*, she stopped short, as though suddenly remembering something; and, having glanced back and seen that the long stretch of road visible behind was deserted as that which lay before her, she opened the folds of her cloak and looked within. At the same instant a pair of feet, almost as noiseless as those of a red Indian, sprang from the field withinside to a partial gap in the stiff fence close by where she stood, and thence to the road a few paces before her. It was but a meeting of old acquaintance when these two faced each other. Yet could the situation have been fixed as by photograph, instantly and well a picture to strike an artist's fancy—but such as (thanks to our good God) is not of every day's painting by our Irish roadsides—would have been produced. For a whole story of frailty and fickleness, of sin and shame, suddenly revealed, might be read off the twinkling eyes and whistling lips of Billix the rabbit-catcher; and the downcast, yet defiant glance and set teeth of the girl. The time and place of meeting, the burden that she bore,—betrayed by the too hasty movement to conceal it—and a knowledge of previous facts serving to “put two and two together,” had told all too completely to leave a doubt in Billix's mind, or a hope of its existing there in that of Sally Landy. Then to Billix's natural first feeling of triumph at having thus stumbled on a secret which the parish had failed to ferret out, succeeded a commiseration not less natural in a man who, though reckless himself, and of reckless kith and kin, had at least an honest woman for his mother, and who had known his neighbour's daughter from her

innocent childhood, and met with many a little kindness at her hands; and looking what, for the moment, he really was, dumbfounded, he stood still and silent, facing the girl who, on her part, kept still and silent, too.

It was, however, as may be guessed, Billix, who broke silence. Feeling that "somewan must say something," he began in a manner more near to shamefacedness than many knowing him would imagine possible to him.

"I hear tell you wor away from home, Miss Landy."

"An' away from home I am sure enough," she replied, with a meaning in her half sorrowful half scornful tone which he fully understood.

"'Tisn't the way you're going home now, then?"

"I have no home to go to."

"That's a hard saying, my dear girl. I always knew Pether Landy had the *sthalk** in him: "but, afther all, sure you're his own; an' what can't be cured must be enjured."

"If I was not his own he mightn't be so hard on me. And may be 'twould be better for me if he was harder on me before now," returned Sally, to whom her father was her father yet, where a stranger intervened. "At all events, he'll be harder on others than ever he was on me."

"An' that 'ont help to make them put in a soft word for you," added Billix. "Well, God help you, poor girl! 'Tis the way o' the world: when you're down, down with you!"

* *Sthalk* (pronounced as spelled) means fixed doggedness.

Aye, down with you indeed! thought the unfortunate Sally. She had come down to this; down to be an object of pity, half contemptuous pity to Billix Santry, on whom contemptuous pity (unmingled save by perhaps a little dread) was the feeling bestowed by every one of good repute she knew. Billix, the very Pariah of the parish! Sally's national education had served to inform her what a Pariah is; though, unhappily, having imbibed a character naturally vain, with undue conceit of a little learning, and so strengthened her false hopes of being made a lady of, it had failed utterly to serve her as a stay against occasions of herself become such a one. She had often, most likely, read and written, that "pride goes before a fall;" but only now did she realize the truth of this forecasting. And now, upon the sudden sharp contrast of what she was with what she had fancied she should be, hot tears burst from the eyes which a few minutes before looked as though no such things as tears belonged to them. And these tears, at once effect and cause of a mood more and more soft than that in which she had encountered Billix, led her to take sympathy to heart from even *him*. It was, perhaps, a relief to her to have her confidence thus taken by surprise; as it certainly was soothing to be spoken to by some one knowing her story, in whose tone contempt did not altogether overbear compassion.

"An' the ould man refused out an' out?" pursued Billix. "Why, thin, as that's the case, wasn't it a pity you didn't stay longer down the country?"

"I—I couldn't," Sally replied, her tears swell-

ing to sobs: "a—a bachelor was coming to me aunt's to-night match-making for one of her own girls; and—"

"I see," considerably interrupted Billix. "Shrof* was an awkward time—out an' out is the way to say it so, egor! Well, well; an' where'll you take airth at all, at all?"

"The earth I'd like to take is the earth I'd go to feet foremost," returned the girl, when she could speak connectedly.

"Hush, girl, hush!" Billix said. "We must all wait God's time, the good and bad iv us. You'll go away, may be, to America, afther a while?"

"I'll go away somewhere, without any while before it, Billix, if I can. Somewhere, as my aunt says, where there'll be nobody to know me or mine."

"Very fine," commented Billix. "Well, then, I hope she put her hand in her pocket an' gev' you the mains o' goin? She didn't?"

"If she'd give it to me I wouldn't have it from her. I had enough meself to pay the fare back in the night mail to the cross yonder. And little or much let it be that'll take me farther, I'll look for it from them that can't lay it on me as an obligation."

"A body may guess where you're goin' to now, then?" said Billix, after a moment's thought, and in a manner expressive, rather of having already guessed than of desiring, to be told in plain words whither.

* Shrovetide.

"Every body will soon enough know where I'm going to, an' where I came from," rejoined Sally, in a manner that fairly retorted upon that of Billix: one which made the words convey a jealously-put question rather than the simple assertion that its form would make the phrase.

"Be the law of arms! if they don't find out any other way, I promise you they 'ont be the wiser for your bein' overtaken be Billix to-day morning," responded the rabbit-catcher. "Honour bright, no! I can tell you I come be sthranger sacrets in me day, Sally—though you mightn't think me a very likely confidant; an' faithful I kep' 'em. I defy man or mortal to say I ever broke trust on the thing I undertuk to keep dark on!"

Sally drew a long breath of relief. "I'm going, Billix, on a fool's errand, may be—where I went too often on a fool's errand before," she said, after a moment's pause.

"I'll tell you what, then," Billix said, "may be 'twouldn't be a bad job for you if I went along 'ith you where you're goin, eh?"

"May be he wouldn't like it—though what do I care what he likes or dislikes, now!"

"I 'ouldn't if I was you—unless it was a thing you wor expectin'—"

"I'm expecting nothing but that he'll give me a trifle to get rid of me. An' I'll take it; that others that don't want me now any more than he does, may be rid of me, too."

"He knows you're comin'?"

"I wrote to tell him I was coming; an' that if he didn't come to meet me I'd go up to the house to look for him."

"Egor, that was the way to say it or not to say it at all," remarked Billix.

"That's what I wouldn't have the courage for," Sally said, "though I said it."

"An' he wrote back to you? He didn't put his name to it?"

"He needn't," said Sally, with a bitter sigh.

"I b'lieve you: you knew the hand." "An' (aside) so do you, too, Billix boy!" "An' he wrote back to you to come?"

"If I was coming to come as usual."

"An' as us'yal was airy in the morning?"

"Yes," Sally said, a deep flush restoring for the moment to her poor pale face the bloom of health and beauty which had caught the fickle fancy of her betrayer.

"How crabbit these magistrates grow!" commented Billix, "even when they're not bred lawyers. They know what black an' white can do agin a man. He was afeared he'd commit himself, as Curran said to the judge long ago. 'Walk a mile before you write a line,' I hear wan iv 'em say. So he expects you: but he doesn't expect me—this morning. But for all that I'll be to the fore, or my name is Antony. There's great vartue in a witness. 'Two to wan 'ould kill a poor man,' they say. But, be the law of arms, two to wan 'ill sometimes defeat a rich man! An' two to wan we'll be with the Squire yondher to-day morning!"

"I was sure iv it," continued Billix, to himself, as, on hazarding this last by no means random shot, he glanced at Sally Landy. "Silence gives consent. He's the very man. An' all the better;

for he's no great cower* to dail with on a pinch, or I'm much mistaken in me man." After which conclusion, Billix walked on awhile in silence, but attentively shortening his customary strides, so as to suit Sally's languid and listless, though impatient steps.

"Be the law of arms, I have it all now!" he cried at length. "See here to me, Sally girl. First, I'll take me stand, meself an' Vix—you'll be mute as a mouse, old girl; 'ont you, Vixie?" to the dog which had been standing and walking, as they stood and walked, between the speakers, looking alternately, and as if understandingly, at each—"where we'll see an' hear how he'll thrate you. An' if he 'ont do as he ought be you, we'll just dhrop in on him, (as we did on yourself 'ithout intending it while ago), an' I'll tell him I was hidin' in the same cover before an' hear him swear he'd marry you."

"An' so you might if you were listening," eagerly put in Sally.

"An' may be I was," interrupted Billix.

"Many a time he said he'd marry me; that he didn't care for fine ladies to spend his money; that he knew I was a good housekeeper an' a decent father an' mother's child. More shame for me not to give more heed to that part of his soft talk!"

"Solomon wasn't always sensible," said Billix, consolingly.

"I was never sensible, I see too late," returned Sally.

* No great cower (however derived) seems to mean no great bally.

"May be he'd keep his word yet, now the ould lady is out of the way?"

"No," Sally said; "I lost me only chance—if chance I had—in not going to her before she got too bad to speak to any one—an' before any one but our two selves knew of it. He offered me fifty pounds that morning to buy clothes, or whatever I liked to do with it, to wait an' not disturb her peace o' mind. I scorned it then."

"Mora fool you not to take it, whatever come afther: money is always in saison," said Billix. "I wish you had that same said fifty pounds in your pocket to-day morning, an' bid good bye to him for a bad bargain. The never a chance you had of anything else, take my word for it, my dear girl. I always hear the ould lady was very high in herself, humble as she'd spaik to poor people. She was a dail o' betther family than his father, high as the Garlands held their heads."

"I don't know," returned Sally; "but I'm sorry I didn't try. He had his own reasons for preventing me when he made that offer—he that's so fond o' money."

"Didn't he say he didn't like to disturb her mind?" Billix said. "An', of coorse, she couldn't be the aisier o' knowing her son brought sorrow on an old neighbour's child. He was always very fond iv his mother an' respected her—her word was law with him; I see that meself: but marriage is a word he'd never hear from her in regard to Pether Landy's daughter, believe you me."

"No matter now," Sally said, impatiently.

"Aye," resumed Billix, "give every rogue his jue, whatever other faults Squire Garland has, he

ever an' always was a good son: an' may be—what did you call it?" he asked, interrupting his speech, and glancing at the little burden now covered up again."

"Mary."

"A girl! well, sometimes they're betther than the boys for a man. An' may be she'll be a good child to him yet in return for it. Who knows? Egor, I see richer men than ever Squire Garland was, wanting a child to care 'em in the end o' their days. Wance in me life I see a richer man left to die like a dog—if a dog had a grand room an' a soft bed to die in—'ithout wan to retch him a dhrink among all the idle crew about him that he gev too much dhrink to himself. I walked up stairs every step me own self, an' into the room, an' gev him what he wanted, whin I hear his moanin' an' callin' outside the window, an' see the way the house was—open house in airnest.

'An' is there no wan but you, Billix?' says the poor man, says he.

'I wish it was a betther man, your honour,' says I.

'Never mind,' says he, thrying to smile: 'twill be all the same in a hundert years' time—an somethin' sooner. Thank *you*, Billix.'

'Twas as much as he could do to get out the words plain. An' if he was able or willin' to say more, I don't think he ever see any wan to say it to. I often sence then say to meself, 'who knows, Billix, me boy, how *he*'ll be off another day?' An' who knows, little girleen, but you may be welcome to your fater yet?"

"An' then, when she was out o' the way of

being disturbed," resumed Sally, who seemingly had held by her own train of thought whilst Billix had gone off on his, "he told me she made him make her a solemn promise on her dying bed to do his best to marry a respectable—"

"Did I tell you?" asked Billix, seizing the moment's pause Sally made.

"Virtuous woman as soon as decency would allow after she was gone."

"Well, 'tis hard to say what a man ought do betune two promises," said Billix, "but that's naither your affair nor mine. I suppose he'll keep the wan that best suits him. An' they say he is doing that already. There's an old lady visiting up at the big house, a friend o' the family, that they say is making a match for him with a niece of her own. But if he breaks his promise to you, he ought to behave han'some to you for goin' out o' the way iv his keepin' the other. Put him in mind o' what he offered you, at all events. An' what you say, I'll swear to. He 'ont bring us to book on it, though, Jah P. as he is, I'll go bail. He'll tell me I was poaching on his land when I tell him I was hearkening to himself an' you; an' I'll tell him I was—an' he may swear me to that at all evints—an' I'll tell him to do his big best to punish me; an' see if he'll cut his nose to vex his face then!"

Carried away by the thought of a triumph over the Squire, to whom it seemed Billix owed an old and strong and bitter grudge, he laughed aloud. Whilst struck to the heart by the contrast of present time and place and circumstances, with others when she, happy and thoughtless, had laughed

with or at the laugh of Billix Santry, Sally gave way to another and fuller burst of tears; and her baby, again wakening, took up its faint part in that baby tune which is neither laugh nor cry.

"What 'ill you do 'ith it all, at all?" cried Billix, ashamed of his mirth, and glad of what might turn attention from his thoughtlessness, and possibly give him opportunity to make amends for it. "Sure if *that*, (a bottle of milk which Sally was drawing from her pocket left-handedly, and which he helped to extricate), "if that is what you have to give it, 'twould be the betther o' bein' warmed this cold mornin'. I dont see a puff o' smoke yet anywhere. But there is the chimney of a house where they 'ont be long nor lazy making the good fire wance they set about it. I could get that made piping hot in ten minutes for the poor little *bansheen*, and find a snug spot for yourself to sit in the main time. But I'll tell you what, Sally; thinkin' of it put me in head of a betther plan all out. We're a good two miles yet from Cuilraike gate an' 'twill set you to carry yourself that far in good time an' to have nothin' else to carry."

"I know that," rejoined Sally, "but what else can I do?"

"Do! just hand that little girleen there over here to meself, an' I'll engage to find her a warm dhrink an' a warm berth too till you're on your way back to the Cross. I suppose you'll go as you come, private?"

Sally nodded assent.

"Just do as I bid you, then; an' I'll go bail the never a wan 'ill know who owns it. I'll find a

good excuse for what I'll do. 'Tis the best o' your play on all scores to laive it behind you for awhile. For the child's own sake you want to get as much as you can out of his worship yonder; an' though many an hon—."

Here, Billix's native tact interposed to cut short the word which poor Sally would keenly feel undue to her.

"Many a poor woman goes to the magistrate with her *garlock* in her arms; but 'guilty conscience needs no accuser,' you know; yours might tell tales. An' if you met the visitor, (an' she's up as airly as himself, and about the place as busy as a bee, be all accounts, seein' if he sees afther his business, I suppose), if you come across her, and med mischief between himself an' herself, your story would be told in the way o' getting a good hould iv him. Keep that hanging over him. Though 'tis a word an' a blow often enough with Billix in his own affairs, I'd advise you again it: keep the last shot in hand for him, till all else fails. An' sure you don't know now how soon you may meet some o' the neighbours goin' the road yourself, too," Billix urged; having, as he thought, kept his own best argument for last. "Do as I tell you, then, an' I'll come on behind you, so that no wan 'ill know we wor bound on the same business, till we're at the spot."

To this and more Sally gave attentive ear. For if at the outset of her dismal pilgrimage she had made the best of hard necessity, by striving to persuade herself—in, probably, sentiments recollected from some story she had read, and in her inexperience fancied true to nature—that the

actual presence of her baby might further her errand with the baby's father, the realities of her last few hours' experience had, through her own strangely mingled feelings, convinced her how little likely was the intervention of a cold, cross infant, crying out at inconvenient times, to give the requisite touch—i.e. the touch that turns to gold—to the cooled-down ardour of the notedly close-fisted Squire Garland. She owned Billix right in his rough-and-ready argument that its absence was the best company on such a visit as she was about to make: and in truth only needed to be shewn how and where she might prudently and not unkindly leave it out of sight, in order to agree thankfully to doing so. Perhaps a half-conscious dread of seeming, in even Billix Santry's judgment, too ready to consign it for the passing hour to a stranger's care, was the main cause of her allowing him to spin out his arguments to needless length before openly agreeing to his proposition. Then she did hand over to him her little burden, wrapping it as best she could in a shawl hitherto covering both herself and it. And Billix, stepping carefully as though entrusted with charge of a sole and lawful heiress to Cuilraike, then turned up Connor Kennedy's *borheen*; Sally walking straight onwards as he advised meantime.

"I'll tell you what, me little Posy," he said, glancing alternately at his bundle of shawls and the path before him; "if we 'knock an' ring,' now, as quality ought, we'll be kep waiting, may be, till they're in full dhress, fit to receive company! An' then, again, how long 'ould it take

us to make a packet that 'ould hould wather (as they say) betune Connor an' the Colleen dhas—wan 'ith this cross question an' the other with that? If we can retch to the door fair an' softly, 'ithout meetin' any wan, we'll just take chance for takin' a little rise out of 'em both. Wance you're inside anyhow, 'possession is eleven points o' the law.' If the *vanithee* turns black on it, sure I can set all right again bymeby. An', egor, I'd like to see how she'll take it: 'twill be as good as a play, only a man can't be here an' there."

Arriving at the door, he laid down his "little Posy" bundlewise without it; but tenderly and warily, so as that no outcomer, however hasty, might be at all likely to tread on it. Then (as he in thought described to Sally) he "slipped gingerly round the house, over ground like could crackers to walk on," to where a window in the gable end looked, when the tidy blind was up, out on the bawn, which bawn itself, busy and cheerful as green at this same hour of a summer's morning, was now brown and bare, and, as he gladly saw, "'ithout a stir in it."

Throwing a very few small pebbles, chosen from the clear pool close to hand, at the glass withinside which, as he calculated, Connor most likely was by this time finishing his morning prayers, he the next moment ducked under the furze hedge bordering the near side of the bawn, and which, running the very short cut he would take to the high road, would cover his retreat from any outlook from door or window of the house he left behind.

"Here we are, egor!" he exclaimed softly to himself, as after a few moments' patience he heard the house door shaken to and fro to free it; frost bound as it was after the night, and Connor's own voice—following a first impulse upon all occasions—calling for "Johanna!"

"Connor himself!" said the delinquent; "now that's the crame o' the joke. An' I think I may break cover now—before the cry is up." And so, stepping forth, he ran like a hare along the headland, and onward, till fairly beyond Connor's bounds. "Be the law of arms," he added, as at length he stood a moment to take a long breath, and before drawing nearer Sally, "I'd give the best brace I ever sold the Colleen dhas, for one half-hour behind the back door now."

CHAPTER V.

During part of the time occupied by these little incidents on the one hand, Squire Garland on the other might have been seen walking in what Billix would call, "wan of his improvements."* On a path leading from an old-fashioned stile beside his own entrance-gate by a short cut to the great house, he paced to and fro; his hands plunged deeply in his pockets, and his countenance betraying thoughts plunged no less deeply in a brown study. Though endowed with so agreeable a

* That is a shrubbery: plantations of recent date are commonly so called in Munster.

name, he was aware that his conversation was of anything but sweet savour in the nostrils of the priest of his parish, or, to say truly, of the parson either. And at the present juncture he was considering how far projects and prospects which he had begun to feel interested in, might be marred by an intervention—through appeal from Sally or her friends—of one personage or the other; and cursing, in a gentlemanly way, “the folly that put it at all within their power to meddle or make in his affairs.”

At length, in one turn—pre-ordained to be the last—he raised his head and shook his shoulders, as though to cast off thoughts which he “damned the use of now!” looking at his watch, and then back towards the house, as if impatient of the lapse of time “spent dancing attendance on a foolish girl,” or of the prospect of inconvenient interruption when the tardy visitor should have arrived. On once more drawing near the stile, he stood still a few moments, as if listening, instead of as before turning on his heel, and then, quickly, as if counted by one, two, three, and away, he had stepped on and set foot on the wide first landing, in order “to look over and see if there was any sign of her.” At that same moment Billix, on the roadside, a few paces off, had overtaken Sally—both, walking on the grassy border sloping to the ditch, had been unheard in their approach; and, laying a finger on her shoulder, he was in the act of opening his lips to whisper, “that if he sot here (to rest himself morya!), an’ she on the other side (an’ she wanted it), till himself would come to her”—when thought and speech were stayed

by the sudden apparition of the head and shoulders of the Squire himself above their heads. Whilst the latter, confronting thus unexpectedly the up-turned faces of both Sally and the rabbit-catcher, halted as he stood on one foot, in his surprise; and had well nigh fallen back before custom prompted his setting down the other one beside it.

Prompted by the same custom, whilst uncertain as to whether he had better hold his ground or disappear, he said, "How are you, Sally? Good-morrow," (to Billix). "I gave you a start, I believe," he added, with an attempt at the easy urbanity of the Squire addressing his poor neighbour's daughter, to Sally, who, pale and trembling, remained silent where she stood. "But, 'pon my honour, you (and as he spoke his eye involuntarily passed on to Billix) gave me a start, too."

Billix came closer to the stile, and stood in front of Sally, who, as he luckily guessed better than the Squire, could ill attempt to essay an opening for herself. Served by instructive remembrance of his own constant caution to other delinquents, that what was said would be set down against him, Mr. Garland remained silent. But, Billix, although he never may have heard the proverb that makes silence golden, felt his advantage—the more so for standing as he did upon the queen's highway, and he kept silence, too. But the longest pause must end; and the Squire's sense of superiority impelled him to say at length—

"Well, Santry?"

"Will you come over, Squire?" returned

Billix, in a confidential undertone; "or will you stay where are you, and talk down to us?"

"Why," said the Squire, thrown off his guard by the very impudence of an impromptu that served Billix better than could any stratagem he may have planned, "what do you want, Billix?"

"Not much for meself, as your worship may guess," Billix replied, with a respect of which the Squire felt the irony: "o'ny a touch o' me thrade beyond the common—oppotchunity to stop the airth on the fairest game I uver run to cover."

"You may do it this time, Santry," the Squire graciously returned.

"Thank your honour," was naturally the retort courteous of the rabbit-catcher; yet, to Mr. Garland's surprise and annoyance, he kept steadily to the earth he stood on; and again silently waited till the Squire again impatiently repeated, "Well?"

"Well, then, your worship knows the witness to a promise is the best witness to a braich iv it."

"What promise and what breach," asked Mr. Garland, "turning," as Billix noted to himself "all colours but the wan that 'ould be no turn to him, black-blue."

"You know, Mr. Garland," Sally said, "you promised—not to say promised—but you offered me fifty pounds."

"Pity a woman can't hould her tongue!" Billix said, under his breath. "Well," he continued aloud, "if you like, an' if his worship likes, let that be the only promise we'll talk iv his keeping—if he keeps it out of hand."

"You owe me an old grudge, Mr. Billix," said

the Squire, too much irritated now to be altogether prudent.

"Egor, if I do," returned Billix, "as I didn't pay you before now, act like a man an' a gentleman to-day, an I'll forgive you."

"Forgive me!" repeated Mr. Garland, in a tone that made Billix, though really watchful of himself, for Sally's sake, grow irritated, too.

"Aye," he said; "'an when I say so, may be 'tisin't thank you for nothin' you ought say, Squire Garland."

Not "may be," but certainly, any cool observer would have said. Luckily for the Squire, he was not too hot for caution. Billix was reputedly the ablest, and, when his blood was up, the wickedest man in the barony. He was believed to have given the death blow to more than one in faction-fights; and now, with an old grudge to be avenged, and an injured, and perhaps vindictive, woman by, whose part he took—"Give him an excuse, and I'll never take another information," thought the Squire.

"Perhaps I was hard on you, Santry," he said; "I was young on the bench then, and heard bad accounts of you, Billix. Let bygones be bygones; and—"

"I am willin'," returned Billix, "for wan. Let bygones be bygones from this day out. But I'll tell you what, Squire, I was as innocent o' what was laid to my charge that day as the baby that poor crature had to laive behind her on her road—on the hard frosty airth on a sthranger's land—"

"She did?" exclaimed the now terribly startled Squire.

"Be the law of arms, she did! What else could she do, 'ithout house or home to turn to; naither a friend's house nor a friend's purse to help her? I suppose that's what your law 'ould call desartin' it?"

"Man!" cried Mr. Garland, "do you remember to whom you're telling that?"

"Who has the best right to be tould iv it?" demanded Billix in his turn. "She didn't laive it so very far from the right door to lay it at but that your worship 'ill hear more than that about it. If thim that 'ill find it come in good time, you'll know how it ought to be registhered: an' if there's any other sort of investigation, why, sure, isn't it to a magistrate she's tellin it? Your worship 'ill be ready prepared, knowin' all about it beforehand."

"Surely, Sally," exclaimed the squire, "you didn't mean to—"

"To kill it?" supplied Billix. "No more than you will if you keep her shilly-shallyin' here, when every moment is worth goold. But she has her mind made up," he added, nudging Sally, who needed to put no mask on a countenance fixed enough to look like resolution; "look at her, an' you'll see it; not to stir so much as wan step back towards it, let what will happen, 'ithout the mains o' rearing it somethin' like what ought to be."

"You can't but know," the squire said, again addressing Sally, "I never keep so much money in the house."

"Your name is good for more than that, Mr.

Garland," again interposed Billix; "you can draw a cheque for it, an—"

"Cousin Richard!" here was heard, in a piping yet not peevish old voice, coming from a distance; "Cousin Richard, where are you, are you there?"

Again Billix nudged Sally. Every moment now indeed was worth gold to Mr. Garland, if he was to marry money in the shape of his visitor's niece. Billix felt this triumphantly; but as to the unhappy girl, God only knew with what added bitterness she looked to thus gaining her poor point.

"Well," said the confused squire, looking behind him, and again turning towards the stile as "Cousin Richard!" was repeated, drawing nearer; "you can't want it altogether: I have ten pounds in the house."

"No sir," Sally said, "that would never do."

"But what can you want of it all at once?"

"Because 'tis now or never I'll get it: I know that, Mr. Garland."

"Egor, that's the way to say it!" approved Billix, in an undertone.

"Cousin Richard, is that you?"

"Confound you! I wish it wasn't," the squire replied within his teeth. "Coming, coming, ma'am.—I can't come back just now (to Sally), but I'll give you the cheque, 'pon my honour!"

"An' she must go back now or never," added Billix, significantly. "Sure 'twont take five minutes to write up at the house. Miss Landy 'ill thrust me to bring it down safe to her."

"I will," Sally said, seeing that she must trust somebody, though perhaps not without a

misgiving—so bad a name had Billix—that he might, if he could, turn the trust to his own account. But had not the squire pledged “honour and faith and soul” to her before, and broken plight?

“Be it so,” the squire concluded hastily on his part. “Coming, coming, ma’am: I’ll be with you this moment,” he responded to the voice now dangerously near the scene.

“Be the law of arms, ’tis always bett’er to face the inimy!” said Billix to himself. And adding to Sally, “Set you down on the step,” and “Lie you there, Vix, ould girl!” to the dog which crouched obediently at Sally’s feet, he topped the stile from the roadside, just as Mr. Garland dropped off his step upon the other to meet and escort back the gaily-dressed old lady now turning a corner of the path but a few paces off. Her inquisitive anxiety to learn (as Billix phrased it) “what the squire was up to,” his sudden appearance thus met and partly answered: the while he “tuk her in with wan scan, from the crown of her cock-a-hoop bonnet to the lucky corn in her slipper shoe that kep’ her from comin’ to spoil sport too soon.”

“Who is that?” she asked, as Billix touched his hairy cap.

“A poor man his honour was just giving laive to ferret now an’ thin on the demesne, me lady,” he answered readily. “Wance a week or so, when the rabbits is scarce elsewhere,” he added; with a questioning glance from the corners of his seemingly downcast eyes upon the squire.

“You gave leave?” asked the old lady, with

possibly a view to her niece's future interest in the squire's burrow.

"Yes," the squire said aloud, and not grudgingly; for that moment at least he felt obliged to Billix: "I've promised Santry, and I'll keep my word."

"Thank your honour," with another touch of the cap. "I'd best step on to the house, by your honour's laive, an' wait till you write the bit iv a scroll for me an' thin no one can be stoppin' me, the odd time that I'll come," concluded artful Billix, moving to pass on outside the walk, and leave the gentleman and lady to themselves.

"Aye, do," assented Mr. Garland, adding to the innocent old lady as Billix disappeared, "when you've been longer with us, my dear ma'am, you'll understand that's a sort of fellow it would not be over safe to provoke by a refusal, and that's better got shut of with all despatch when one does happen to have anything to say to him."

Sally, when left alone beside the stile, crouched down, submissively as Vix, drawing the hood of her cloak more closely round her face as she thus turned towards her father's fields,—her own lost home—from which she, then and there, "wouldn't for all the world a single eye should spy her!" Looking up along the lane before her she appeared unconscious of the time that Billix was away. It seemed, or rather it felt, to her—for she took no witting heed to its lapse—far longer than it was, as the times she had come on false pretexts down that old borheen to meet her deceiver—those sunny days and stilly evenings

one by one flitted over her again, but only to show that they were gone beyond recall. Topping the hill was her honest father and mother's cabin, the smoke now rising thinly from its lowly roof. Oh Paradise, could she but return to it, walking on her knees, the Sally that she was but one short year ago! What must it be to gaze on the sealed gates of heaven, when the shutting of a smoke-browned door in a mud wall can send such pangs through a poor human heart? But this was a thought then present in the dim distance only to poor Sally's clouded mind.

"Mad I was! Mad I was!" she said: "if I had the luck to be mad entirely before this day!"

Roused by the movements of the dog to meet and greet his master, she looked up to encounter Billix's glance of triumph.

"There you are!" he said, handing her the cheque for fifty pounds; "you're all right now; so come along, you have no time to lose here."

"All right!" repeated she, as mechanically she arose, and followed him. "All right," says he. "Oh holy Mother! will anything ever be right with me again?"

Could it have struck Squire Garland that Billix might, through one motive or other, be himself the presenter of the cheque at the bank in Farrenstown—in which case it decidedly would not be cashed without enquiry; and that, pending this latter, he or others might choose to be conclusively on or off the match projected? In either event "Sally's affair" would be of far less moment to him socially—the only way, heaven help him! that he heeded—and might then at leisure be

compromised at a somewhat lower figure. Could all this have passed before him whilst preparing to fill the cheque made so conveniently "payable to bearer"? Or was it only to the shrewd and certainly not guileless apprehensiveness of Billix that such a scheme occurred as possibly present to "his honour's worship's" mind? Be that as it might, the rabbit-catcher looked like an expert at the somewhat stiff signature; but said only, as he scanned it whilst on the way to join Sally: "Well, we 'ont judge him till we thry him; but, be the law of arms, I know a thrick worth two iv it, an', what's more than I could say iv every thrick I played (God forgi' me!) wan as innocent as the babby I'll be goin' back for; an' that'll set Sally at the safe side o' the bush. I'll do that much, ferreting or no ferreting on the demesne: sure what I never had I never lost."

"Hearken hether to me now!" he said aloud, as he fell back beside his silent fellow-wayfarer, who, cheque in hand, seemed walking in a dream. "But why don't you put that up safe out o' sight, you foolish girl: d'ye think 'twould be on'y ask an' have to get the fellow iv it? Give both your ears to what I'm sayin; for may be we're not out o' the wood yet. What's the first thing you're in head o' doing now? To get back the poor little bansheen"—(a diminutive suggested probably to Billix himself by the faint wailing of the baby)—"first iv all, says you; an' then see afther the money? But I say the other thing. She's sure to you; an' lave her rest where she is, in a warm corner, never you fear; an' I'll see to her in good time. The first thing to look to is

that bit o' paper. There 'ould be two words to make money out o' that for aither you or me. You never thought o' that? Well, don't think iv it now, nor frighten yourself about it. Be said by me; an' I'll make it Bank of Ireland notes for you soon and sudden, I'll go bail. We'll go straight off to the priest with it.—An' egor," he continued to himself, unwilling to add uneasiness on this point to Sally's troubled thoughts, "if his worship mains mischief, he's the man to check him."

"What priest?" Sally said; "but I never could go near either of 'em!"

"Who's askin' you, ma colleen?" returned Billix. "We'll get him to come to you, fair an aisy. Father Delany himself 'ill be the best: he's the nearest to us, an' the nearest to the town, an' let me see the clerk 'll refuse to give the cash to him! Do you take a sait in my cabin, you know your way across the fields to it, an' you'll find the kay undher the thatch, if it is a thing I don't be there as soon as you. An' I'll run be the road an' let his reverence know there's a poor thraveler taken short wantin' him. Istherday was fair day: an' the housekeeper 'ill think 'tis some thramp bad enough to be with Billix, an' 'tis no matther what the priest 'ill think—he'll tell no tales. An' sure," concluded Billix, "'twill do you no harum to have a word with him yourself before you take the salt say to lave all iv us behind. An' you know he's 'chaip John' as they say: he sends no wan for a skull, be all we hear iv him."

"Very well," passively assented Sally.

"Over the ditch with you, then, here below; an' make the best o' your way. An' I promise you I'll lose no time."

"We hear tell o' the devil quotin' Scripture," Billix added to himself as Sally and he thus went their separate ways. "An' who knows, Billix boy, but the prayers o' that cratur or her innocent child may be heard for a happy death for you—vagabone, as you are—yet?"

CHAPTER VI.

Connor Kennedy's wife was customarily prompt as Petruchio to obey a summons from him whom she spoke of (if she did not invariably think of) as "the masther:" and on this memorable morning she presented herself no less readily than usual at Connor's call.

"Look at that!" he said.

"I see it!" responded she. "The unfortunate little creature!"

Putting a last pin, from out her mouth, in her neckerchief, she came from the door-way, and rather unhandily took the baby from the ground. "Bring me up the clothes-basket out o' the room," she said to Connor.

Connor did as he was bidden. The little stranger was laid in the basket by the hearth. It gazed, half sleepily, towards the rafters, and seemed undecided as to whether or not it would take its place contentedly. Connor and his wife

stood looking at it; an expression of perplexity gathering in the countenance of each. After a while Connor turned away and sat down on a chair set beside the door.

"I wonder," he said, "what brought it here?"

For answer, Mrs. Kennedy turned from the new-made cradle, and, seizing the tongs, took up the embers placed over night beneath the ashes on the hearth. She laid fresh turf around the kindling, and, sitting on a wooden block in the corner facing Connor, took up the tail of her gown, and with it slowly fanned the fire. At another time Connor could have laughed at this. But something now withheld him from reminding her of the bellows lying on the settle just behind her, or from offering his own services to use them. At length the silence became intolerable. "Johanna," he began.

"Hould your tongue," returned she, pointing to the loft above "the room" whence familiar sounds announced the coming descent of the servant-girls, "This poor little creature must get something anyway."

The fire, now shewing signs of reddening up, was left to itself, and Mrs. Kennedy took a saucepan from the clevy and went to the dairy to get milk. Connor rose and followed her.

"Johanna, I tell you—" he began again, "An' I tell you," interrupted Johanna pausing in her blowing of the cream from off a pan, "I tell you to keep quiet. There'll be time enough for talking!"

Connor went back into the kitchen. His wife quickly following, reached the fireplace as one of

the maids was nimbly stepping down the ladder that held the place of stairs.

"O law!" cried the girl, as she espied the tenant of the clothes-basket: "what's that ma'am?"

"A child the masther found this morning, deserted by its unnatural mother I suppose," said Mrs. Kennedy. "A job for you, Mary, till we see more about it! 'Tisn't worth *your* while to go out again," she continued addressing Connor, who obediently re-seated himself now on a block in the chimney-corner.

"Where was it you found it, Sir?" asked the maid.

"Between this an' the road," answered her mistress. "The creature is perished. Blow up the fire you, Mag."

Breakfast was set going, and not slowly. The little stranger fell asleep after having taken a full meal at the hands of Mary, superintended by Mag, to the great amusement of both. Then both girls went abroad to their business of the hour, and Connor and his "mistress" sat down as usual.

"You're not aiting," Connor said.

"I'm not," she said shortly. Connor continued his meal in silence. Mrs. Kennedy sat with a knife in her hand and rocking herself to and fro. "When I think," she went on, "what you said to me that morning when you went away an' stayed away from me, an' what James Connors said to me—like a fool I only laughed at that thin—"

"You don't believe me?" Connor said.

"I dun know what to b'lieve, God knows!"

"I'll go to the priest an' take me oath iv it."

"You needn't, an' I'd rather you 'ouldn't," said she. And an expression flitted across her countenance which seemed to add: "I wouldn't give it to say to any wan I'd think so bad o' you"—"Let it dhrop," she said decisively.

Both were a while silent. Then Connor wiped his mouth, blessed himself, stood up and came close to her with a strange expression in his usually humorous face.

"Johanna," he said solemnly, "if what's past and gone doesn't make you b'lieve my word, please God the future will."

Then quietly taking up his hat he left the room, and proceeded as quietly to his every-day business. His wife sat long pondering his words and look. Then, as though somewhat more near to being satisfied, she set about her own day's work including its novel additional charge of the baby stranger.

At two o'clock, Connor returned to his dinner as though nothing had occurred to ruffle him. Mrs. Kennedy followed his lead. The servants, restrained by their example, were silent in their presence, so that during the day no one had as yet proposed the question of how the child was to be disposed of. Meantime, when any one going the road, as the country phrase is, dropped in for "a coal o' fire to light the pipe," or to get "a dhrink o' the wather," Mrs. Kennedy managed to throw for the moment a something not too heavy over the improvised cradle; or she stood between the incomer and a view of it so as to effectually con-

ceal its little tenant. Though why she did so she either could not or would not clearly answer to herself.

Thus it was that when about half-past two in the afternoon, upon Connor's returning to his fields from a meal rather less chatty and shorter in proportion than was ordinary, Billix Santry appeared on the threshold of that back door behind which he had so longed to stand some hours before. There was nothing to betray the presence of (as he said to himself) "wan more that God sent" within the quiet, cleanly and well-ordered kitchen. Mary and Mag had followed their master to stick potatoes; and the *vanithee* herself was, in seeming, intently engaged upon a light patchwork quilt; the one part—to which she was matching, and, when matched, sewing on small diamond-shaped pieces of gay-coloured cottons—lying across her knees and the rest of it over the soundly-sleeping baby. Billix, of course, knew at half a glance what it was that lay beneath the artfully arranged coverlet; and divined almost as readily—it is to be hoped not without some slight pang of self-reproach—the feelings that lay not sleeping, though as silent, under the brightly coloured kerchief of the Colleen dhas.

"What, Billix, no rabbits?" she said in some surprise when the usual greetings had been curtly gone through. Mrs. Kennedy, though cheerful and kindly in manner, was not a woman of many words.

"No rabbits, be the law of arms, ma'am," replied Billix.

Upon which Mrs. Kennedy again gave herself

up to her patchwork with as serene an inattention to Billix' presence as though a rabbit catcher without rabbits was as one who had "found fern seed." The truth probably being that she attributed this call without ostensible business to mere idle prying, prompted by a confab with Mag or Mary as he crossed the fields.

"She 'ont begin it," Billix concluded to himself, after a few moments of playing a waiting game, "so I must. Be the law of arms, an' sure 'tis meself thought I'd have the whole story thrown at me before I was over the thrashild.

"Might a body ask, wor you left anything by way iv a han'sel to-day morning, ma'am?" he said aloud, and looking from Mrs. Kennedy's countenance to the patchwork quilt and back again.

"I b'lieve there's no law again *asking* anything, even the 'law of arms,' as you say yourself, Billix," was the unsatisfactory rejoinder.

"I was given to ondhorstand that you get the loan o' something you 'ouldn't be sorry to get rid of, ma'am?" pursued Billix.

"You were," repeated the vanithee, suddenly facing round on him, "you were given to ontherstand: an' who gave it to you?"

Had the suspended needle which quite unconsciously she held pointed towards her been the yet undreamed of needle-gun, poor Billix hardly could have felt more like being transfixed.

"Why that 'ould be telling, ma'am," he said, with an attempt at his accustomed jaunty air; "an' I'm not to tell."

"So ho!" exclaimed the Colleen dhas, her face

darkening as a painful suspicion deepened in her mind, "I'll tell you what it is, Billix; if I have anything belonging to anybody else, let the wan that owns it come to claim it. I'll engage to make restitution. But I'll have no second hand dealings, Billix."

Billix understood the full significance of this reply; and it completely posed him. How now was he to keep the second part of his pledge to Sally? That the first was kept and well kept the basket set so cosily beside the fire, screened from draughts by the clotheshorse, "airing clothes as you may say," shewed plainly enough.

"I thought," resumed he in his own mind, "I had an elegant packet made up, as tidy as you please; but, be the law of arms, if I tell the Colleen dhas now I know where the mother is, she should know where herself; an' she's just the woman that would step over, 'ithout with your laive, or be your laive, an' be down upon poor Sally. Egor, we must laive the job to his reverence too. No wan else 'ill manage this good 'oman."

Better, then, it seemed to turn the discourse to something else. The something else he chose, however natural, was not the most advisable under existing difficulties.

"I suppose the masther is out in the fields, ma'am?" he said.

Mrs. Kennedy, to whom this appeared for the moment a thoroughly transparent device, returned with an irony of which Billix, (ay, Billix though he was,) felt the full force:

"Oh dear no!" she said, "why should you

suppose he's in the fields? He's setting in his flowered dhrressing gown an' his velvet slippers in his arm-chair in the drawing room, where you know you'd go look for him if you wanted him."

"God forgi' me, but Connor got it from herself, an' maybe he'll get more iv it," inferred Billix, "but what can I do now?"—"Be the law of arms, ma'am, I don't want him, an' hadn't a word to say to him this blessed day," he asseverated.

But almost before he could say thus much Johanna's really and sensitively true womanly instinct led her to disguise (if unable quite to despise) her own suspicions. And she added, with a change of manner, yet—resolved to get, if possible, to the bottom of this discreditable mystery—not a change of purpose :

"Wan word is as good as ten, Billix—"

"Sometimes betther, ma'am," put in Billix.

"An' wan thing I promise you: nothing I have in my possession will go out of it till the right owner comes for it."

"You promise that, ma'am?" Billix said, after a short pause, which many thoughts had filled.

Johanna started slightly. His tone had perhaps awakened her into perceiving the full possible extent of the promise that she had just put into words. "Well," she said, after pausing a moment or two, "that's my promise, an' I'll stand to it."

CHAPTER VII.

Entrusted as he was with the burden of Sally's sin and sorrow, Father Delany had perhaps no choice as to accepting the charge of securing that provision which, in saving her from want, might help to guard her from a further fall. At all events, his function as confessor was no sooner closed than he consented to perform that errand of charity, and set off with right good will for Farrenstown; it may be that he thought, with Billix, of danger in delay. Proceeding then to the bank, he put his cheque in at the proper pigeon-hole; thinking that at that early idle hour his business would be despatched upon the instant. But, somewhat to his surprise, the clerk, after a moment's scrutiny, disappeared, cheque in hand, and was some minutes away.

"May I ask, father Delany," he said, on his return, "if you saw Mr. Garland sign this yourself?"

"If he did not sign it, Mr. Grice, you'll know where to put your hand upon the forger," returned the priest, jocularly, after a second's pause.

"All right, Sir!" returned the clerk, in a like manner, "if we are to have you up for it. But there really is something so unusual about the signature that, in fact, I don't think we'd honour it for almost anybody but yourself."

"I feel obliged to the agent, and to you," rejoined Father Delany, "but I should not like your

going altogether out of your course for me. We'll not mind the cash for the present, if you please. Just put it to my name, and give me a receipt—in that way all parties will be safe—till the bank is fully satisfied. I suppose three days—”

“Oh, less than that, Sir,” promptly interrupted the clerk. “But,” he added, stopping short in course of doing the priest’s bidding, “there is Mr. Garland himself just opposite the door—”

Opposite to the door—a glass one—the squire might indeed be seen by all observers talking to a country neighbour. Somewhat to the clerk’s surprise, however, Father Delany neither moved towards requesting an acknowledgment of the squire’s name, nor, as he silently held out his hand; did he seem disposed to await another’s doing so.

“You’ll have the receipt, Sir, all the same!” questioned Mr. Grice.

“All the same,” echoed Father Delany, “if you please.” Having got it, he walked out; and crossing the street, on the way to remount his horse and return whence he came, he passed Mr. Garland with a civil distant bow, rather awkwardly returned by the guilty-looking squire.

“Cool enough!” commented Mr. Grice, “if that was a donation.”

The squire made a shrewd guess at the priest’s business in the bank, as the priest thought he would. He had come into the town without any settled purpose. What he might have done had the money not already been applied for, he did not now ask himself, nor perhaps could he well answer. Neither did he explain to himself why—now that his fifty pounds were gone for good and all—he

yet passed on, as the priest also judged he would, directly to the bank, and made the same errand he had meant to make as an excuse for a word with the officials there.

"Good day, Grice," he said, appearing just where Father Delany had stood a few minutes before. "I'll take a pen from you."

"Another cheque of yours has just been handed in by the Rev. Mr. Delany, Mr. Garland," quietly remarked Mr. Grice, as the squire proceeded to use the pen supplied him.

"Well, 'no effects?'" queried the latter, without looking up.

"We could hardly dishonour it on that score," returned Mr. Grice, with a laugh; "only fifty pounds, you know."

"How cool he is, with his only fifty pounds!" thought the squire. But he said aloud only, "Just so;" and, passing to another pigeon hole, "small notes and one in silver, Mr. Gardiner. Thank you. Good day! Good day to you, Mr. Grice!"

"And how cool he is, too!" also thought this last named gentleman. "I shouldn't have guessed that priest or parson could easily get fifty pounds from him."

And so, too, thought a few other folk, bystanders come in at the moment. As surmising, naturally enough, that the squire would not much mind if the bushel were not set down very close over his light, Mr. Grice had spoken audibly enough for those to hear. And so it came to pass, that fruits of this supposed benefaction, though like anything rather than bread cast upon

the waters, returned to Mr. Garland after many years. That the parting with his cool half-hundred, however grievous to him at this present time, should in anywise touch his fortunes in the future, was one of the last thoughts that would have struck him, or any one concerned in the transaction just closed, as he remounted his blood-horse and cantered home to Cuilraike, and Father Delany directed his cob at sobered pace back towards the cabin where he had seen Sally.

It happened that this day's journey of both squire and priest was typical of the way of the world with them, and such as they. The rake's progress was pleasant and unimpeded. The priest, taken off his direct route by an unlooked for sick call, found claim after claim lead him aside mile after mile. And when at length set free to double back on the way to his first purposed visit, some hours had gone by. The afternoon, then, was pretty far advanced when he came again in sight of the cabin whose owner preceded him by a few minutes upon his own return from that baffled attempt upon the Colleen dhas.

"I told you," Billix said, as he sat down to a rest he really needed, "what a warm corner I was goin' to laive the little Posy in, (as I called her to meself this mornin') when I faced Connor Kennedy's. My dear, the Vanithee 'ouldn't hear iv her bein' disturbed out iv her sleep. Egor, if you see her now" (Billix had in imagination seen the effects of warmth and care) "you'd say 'twasn't the same little perished craiture you had out in the could frost this mornin'; an' you'd think it a

mortal pity to disturb her too. An' as to thrusting her to Billix to bring her this far, she 'ouldn't hear to such a thing! I suppose she thinks I'd forget 'twasn't a ferret I had bagged up."

"An' what am I to do?" asked Sally. "How am I to get her over here to me?"

"Do? Oh, we'll manage matthers aisy enough. There's luck in leisure. You must wait till tomorrow at all evints. But what hurt? Sure you 'ont mind putting up with things as they are here wance in a way. You'll be all the betther of a night's rest or more. An' sure you can stay here your lee-lone, if you like it—and of course you will," added Billix, with what, for a rabbit catcher was a chivalrous courtesy, and what Sally felt as such.

"You can be here your lee-lone day an' night till you can make the start to your likin', an' at your aise. An' I'll go bail you 'ont be turned out be any wan comin' to coort *me* for Shrof!" he concluded, with a humour at once gay and grim.

"But, Billix," remonstrated Sally, "how could I turn you out of your own cabin?"

"My dear heart, I'll get a shake-down somewhere aisy enough."

This was hardly true, and Sally knew it; but, thought she, what could she do but what he wished she should, "rest and be thankful"?

"I 'ont lie on a sthrawberry bed, never you fear. If I could see the blink iv a smile in them poor eyes o' yburs before we part 'twould pay me for more than a few nights' lodgin' b'lieve you me, bad as Billix is."

"God bless you, Billix," prayed the now softened and humbled girl; "I have a deal to be thankful to you for."

"Be the law of arms," thought Billix, "you'll have more to be thankful to me for than you know of yet! I dun' know how you'll take it though. Look at that wife o' Connor Kennedy's! There's no knowin' how a woman 'ill take anything—be conthraries I b'lieve is the likeliest, as the pig takes the way to the fair. Here's his reverence again!"

"Speak out, sir, if you please," Sally said, as Father Delany paused on finding Billix present. "But for Billix Santry I would not have much chance of getting what I did. It was he got it I may say indeed."

"Well, then, I may say the money is sure to you, after a day or so perhaps. But in the meantime, if you wish I can—"

"She'll have a delay this way an' that, an' so she needn't trespass much on your reverence," interposed Billix. "'Tis what I was just persuading her to make the best of it an' to rest an' recruit herself for the long road before her. The good 'oman we had to laive the poor little wan to this morning, egor, (I beg your reverence's pardon), she tuk such a fancy to it entirely, as you may say, she 'ont part with it unless the mother herself 'ill insist on gettin' it. An' if she don't insist all out, she'll never part it, she promised solemnly," continued he, glancing from the priest's countenance to Sally's, as he thus by diplomatically fine degrees effected his purpose of "letting the cat out o' the bag."

"And the good woman's husband?" queried the priest, who, it may be supposed, at once knew and did not know where the poor little foundling had been lodged. The how he most likely divined now from Billix's countenance whilst Billix had been reading or trying to read his.

"Oh," returned Billix, whom no such curb confined to common nouns, "as to that all the parish knows what she says Connor 'll swear to."

Now the same train of thought which had kept Billix silently standing beside the Colleen dhas some hours before, passed, also unspoken, through the good priest's mind. Why not leave the little waif in the fixed and quiet home she had dropped thus strangely into? Why expose her to the dangers of the wandering, perhaps wicked life that might be her's in following her unhappy mother's most uncertain lot? True, she might prove a tie to virtue, a restraint in that mother's course; might serve to fix unstable resolves to lead a better life henceforth. To advise either choice involved a serious responsibility; yet it seemed a pity to risk a very probable evil for an exceedingly uncertain good. And the priest, despite his doubts, felt pleased when Billix, who had no such scrupulosity as to giving counsel, put those last thoughts into words, drawing without check on whatever he thought likely to give effect to his assertions.

"I declare," he said, "if you see her, your reverence, settled be the snug fire, as rosy as an apple, and the Vanithee making a beautiful patchwork quilt to cover her, you'd say 'twas a mortal pity ever to stir her out of it: not to laive her,"

he pursued, turning towards Sally, "in a comfortable house an' home. How long 'ould you be hard at work before you'd have the like iv it for her? I'm sure 'twas her guardian angel directed us unknownst to laive her there. An' I'm full sure your reverence thinks the same, though may be you don't think well o' sayin' it till you see things for yourself. An' we all know if she goes 'ithout her 'twill save her tellin' a power o' lies. She should give some account iv herself an' it to get a berth anywhere respectable."

If the case was a less sad one Father Delany might have been strongly moved to smile, as he could see the speaker was, at the close of these last sentences. Turning his back on Billix, he said: "Well, Sally, what say you yourself, if these good people are willing?"

"Willing isn't the way to say it, your reverence," put in Billix from his background. "The never a bit o' the baby should laive the house, the Vanithee vowed to me before I came away with me answer, unless the mother herself, whoever she was, 'ould come an' take it from her, her own self."

"I was just thinking, sir," Sally said, as Billix paused, "that may be 'twould be better for me laive her to 'em. Such as she is, 'twould be a punishment to me to part her now; an' may be the Lord would be pleased to accept it for me sins."

The priest looked kindly on her.

"An', Sir," she continued, "may be the creature 'ould grow up betther with them than with me where I'm going to."

"Don't you think," asked the priest, "that you might rear your child yourself here, and live virtuously, and at the same time suffer, as you say, the penance that your offence deserves?"

"Oh, Sir, I couldn't stay here! I wouldn't for all the world—dont ask me."

"'Tis to America you're going?"

"No, your reverence: to London."

"To London!" repeated the priest.

"Yes, Sir. There's some o' me mother's people in America an' they may hear tell o' me. An' though I may never see the sky over Farrenstown again—"

"You don't like to go so far away?"

"So far away intirely, Sir!"

"Have you made up your mind to that?"

"I have, your reverence, if you dont—"

"O!" said the priest, "I have no—in fact, I have no right to force you to go anywhere in particular. But London is a bad place, a very bad place."

"'Tis the fitter place for me, your reverence," Sally said, humbly.

"Do you mean to go to service there?"

"I do, your reverence. Or to earn me bread any way I can—honestly, I mean," she added, whilst a deep flush passed over her face. "I always had a good warrant to do needlework, your reverence."

"Well," the old priest said, after a long pause, "well, my poor child, under all circumstances I wont say but that it may be better for the present, at least, that your child should stay where she

is; if those good people are really willing to keep her."

"I was thinking, your reverence, to ask you to give 'em some o' the money, that only for her I'd never have the spirit to get from him."

"To give them money?" the priest said, thoughtfully; "I don't know that. I—don't—know that. You may place any part of it you chose in my hands for the present—if you like. But I must think more of it before I advise you to offer that man or his wife money. If they have adopted it, 'tis for God's sake. And sending them money might make them change their mind about keeping it. You can write to me: that will be the best plan. You know how to write?"

"I do: an' to read writing. 'Twould be well for me if I didn't, may be."

"Well, then, you can write to me," resumed the priest, after a pause, to leave the penitent to her own thoughts awhile. "You can write to me when you are settled anywhere. And I'll let you know if your child wants, or is likely to want, assistance. For the present—as you have decided on leaving it—leave it altogether to God and the good people whose hearts He has disposed towards it. Pray for it, and for yourself, that you may both grow in His holy grace. And now, poor child, God bless you, and God be with you."

CHAPTER VIII.

When Billix Santry had accepted, will he nil he, from Mrs. Kennedy that ultimatum which he so improved on afterwards, he took a prudent resolve not to say another word except "Good morning to you, Mrs. Kennedy," till he had put facts and thoughts together before Sally for her mature consideration. And accordingly he made his exit, quitting Currahaly by the front door, and going in full view of one looking (as he guessed the Vanithee was) from the house off in a direction diametrically opposite to the garden, i.e. the potato field, where Connor and his workpeople were to be seen. When he had thus passed out of sight Mrs. Kennedy returned to her seat, but she worked no more that afternoon, at least not at the patchwork quilt. She sat still in that attitude most scorned by busy housewives "with her hands across." In truth, she felt as though both head and hands were full.

The early-falling dusk of the short spring day sent Mag and Mary home to her betimes, whilst just enough light remained to let them see after the cows. But the master did not, as he loved to do, drive home his silky hornless or shorthorned pets, or stand by for a gossip whilst the milking went on within the barn. His Johanna was this evening "left to be mather and man" in that province where Connor ordinarily claimed a man's and master's share of sway. But this thought did

not seem to increase her self-complacency. When all was over she proceeded to a customary point-look-out on the double ditch bounding one side of the bawn, whence, herself unseen, she could observe her husband, like Isaac, meditating in the fields far off. He looked lonesome there at that untimely hour, and she felt herself so where she stood alone. Her heart, and perhaps her conscience, smote her for that day's course of treatment, which she could not help owning had been conducted on the easy old penal plan of "hang him first and judge him after."

Being however, of a cautious though far from cold temperament, she was slow to take back in words those suspicions to which she was also slow to give expression. And she took no heed outwardly of her husband's prolonged absence. If even a tear came with the thought that for the first time in their married life, Connor found his own hearth less pleasant than a walk out in the frosty fields in the night air she wiped it away stealthily whilst skimming the milk that was to serve for supper, and sensibly resolved to sleep on the thoughts aroused by Billix Santry's visit. Arrangements were made duly for the little stranger's safety through the night. Mag and Mary were promoted to the occupancy of the settle bed standing at one side of the kitchen fire-place (which usually was opened but for visitors from amongst her own or Connor's family); Mag, the lighter sleeper of the two, being appointed to lie nearest the clothesbasket—a basket in which the baby happily slept the sleep that waits on a full stomach and vacant mind.

When morning came its morning wants were supplied in the same manner, without remark on the newness of the charge or a word that seemed to say the duty would soon cease. But Johanna, now knowing her own mind and holding to her promise, no longer made any effort to withhold the presence of the child from casual observation. Thus things went on until the second afternoon, when Connor himself put her to the question.

"What is to be done with that child?" he said, as the maid called elsewhere, placed it in her mistress's arms.

"As it is here, let it stay here," said she.

"'Tis you'll have the trouble iv it," Connor said.

"Well; we won't mind that same. People must have trouble o' some sort or other in this world."

"'Tis a good deed!" said Connor, looking kindly at her.

Johanna had laid the infant on her lap, and Connor stood by them—he had risen to return to his fields. She glanced up at him; and something must have spoken in her eyes, for suddenly he stooped and kissed her. From that moment all the bitterness, if not all the reserve of doubt as to the little foundling was over between wife and husband.

Johanna not being one of those who trumpet their own mistakes, had ere then decided on not avowing the promise which she now inclined to think she had been taken in to make. She had, in addition, however, a still better reason for being silent, an apprehension that—if Connor was other-

wise blameless—telling tales might bring him into dangerous collision with Billix Santry. Connor, as well as Billix, could be very angry on occasion. She held her peace then. And, if conscious of getting somewhat more credit than she felt her due, she tried all the more steadily to merit it upon some other points.

In the course of a little time Father Delany took occasion to ascertain if his advice as to the proffering of money was so sound as he inclined to think it. A quiet drop-in from the roadside, and a half-hour's chat put him in possession of the state of mind of Kennedy and his wife. It happened—accidentally it seemed to the good priest—that his conversation with each of the worthy couple passed in absence of the other. But with both the act of adoption appeared so single-hearted and so thorough that he quitted them convinced of the inexpediency of in anywise meddling with it.

On his departure Mrs. Kennedy said to herself: "the priest must know it is baptized, or he'd talk about it; an' what a goose I was not to ask him what I'd do about calling it a name!"

Just at first she had experienced a singular difficulty upon this point; despite the purposed fulness of her charity towards it, she felt, just at first, a repugnance to saying to the servants "Bring or take the child," exactly what she would say if it was her own. So she had begun and continued to call it "the girleen;" and it long was called so by way of a pet name. But the evening before Sally left her native parish, a barefooted townsboy appeared at a gap in the

bawn, where sat Mrs. Kennedy in the superintendence of her milking, put a scrap of paper in her hand and ran off as one who knew the sender's eye was on him yet. On the paper was written : "The child's name is Mary." Mrs. Kennedy put the paper into her pocket and looked on till the cows were milked and driven back to pasture. Then returning to the house, she took the baby from a little girl hired to mind it; and going down into the room, gazed on it as though the disclosure of its name were to discover some correspondingly novel features in the child.

"The Lord is my witness," she said solemnly, "an' His blessed Mother, whose name you bear, child, that I'll be a mother to you as you're left to me! You're my Mary, now; and may God in His mercy convert and comfort the crature that deserted you!"

The year passed away; and though the priest occasionally looked for it, no letter came from Sally. Nor did he ever after hear of her. Her family lost sight of her totally. The good priest feared for her. But for the child—every time he met her and recurred to her unhappy mother, whether dead or living—he more and more rejoiced at having approved of her settlement with her adopted parents. Yet, though in reason satisfied of having acted prudently, the matter left on his mind an impression of responsibility for the child's fate, and an interest in her welfare that, unconsciously to herself, strongly affected her position in her neighbourhood. She always was the child most sedulously instructed at Sunday Catechism, most scrupulously prepared for sacra-

ments, most kindly questioned, and most smilingly encouraged to reply ; till Mary Kennedy, so called, was at length almost forgotten to be "a parisheen."

CHAPTER IX.

Truly do those who sow good resolves reap reward, though it may be in a grain other than they looked for. Up to the date of the girleen's appearance at Currahaly, Connor Kennedy would as soon as another tell a round lie by way of joke. But when his wife's painful doubt of his pledged word left him no alternative but silence, he took a resolution that neither in jest nor earnest, from that time forward, would he give any one reason to doubt the truth of whatever he might say. This he carried out, as was his way with everything he took in hand, earnestly and thoroughly ; till, though no one observed how, Connor Kennedy's word came to be a proverb in the parish. Yet he liked his joke as well as ever. Mrs. Kennedy grew convinced that he had told her the truth, with respect to little Mary, and Connor came to feel that she did him that justice. And thus it was that the girleen became a bond that strengthened their trust in and appreciation of each other, and, perhaps unknowingly to either, kept their kindly hearts pure from that discontent with God's dispensations which hardens many a childless man and wife.

It happened, too, in the meantime, that Mr.

Garland, whose matrimonial wooing had not thriven, continued to enact in the country the part of the man about town. And some of those odds and ends of facts which Rumour catches up and puts together came at length the way of Connor and his wife as they went to Mass and market; and gave them an inkling of the true parentage of little Mary. But, once that their own happiness ceased to be endangered by a doubt, both testified rather a disinclination to be further informed. On some occasions, then, they met hints as to the child by saying: "If any wan belonging to her had a wish to do her any good they knew where to find her; but for *their* part they wanted nothing from 'em."

After Mary's parentage had come to be known, or shrewdly guessed at, amongst Connor's own class in the parish, Sally's parents made an overture concerning "the child's being left a burthen upon Mr. Kennedy." The overture was slow and faint indeed, being made through a married son who "had honest father an' mother's childhren iv his own to airn an' slave for;" and it was promptly and energetically closed by Connor. At a later period, when the old folk had been gathered to their fathers, and when Mary was generally recognised as Connor's adopted child, Johanna, as firm in her own way as her husband was in his, tacitly ignored the existence of "uncle an' aunt, an' cousins too, that didn't want her when they saw nothing to be had by her." So that, saving her relation to her foster-parents, Mary stood in the world as—to use our country phrase—"a bird alone."

CHAPTER X.

When the child had been three years in Connor's home some political disorganization resulted in an appeal to the country by the "patriot minister" of the day; and of course in a new writ for the county and fresh excitement in Farrenstown. This time Connor determined not to be spirited from his post, but duly to record his vote for Mr. Green. And he carried out this purpose without let or hindrance. For a reason best known to himself—though of a sort not to be styled best in any wise—Mr. Garland abstained from attempting to influence his tenant's vote; though he almost (the word is his own) "despised himself for the damned unaccountable something" that deterred him from "doing what he liked with his own." As this something forbade his taking measures to enforce the penal clauses of his lease, or any other of those mild means by which "the landlord of straw melts the tenant of steel," he wisely refrained from threats of what he did not mean to carry out. He forbore even the usual *soi-disant* "Liberal Landlord" course of "sending an account"* to Connor of what he fain would have him do. Not even that could he bring himself to do in Connor's case. And since he could not let Connor be a notable exception, he found business that took him suddenly to Dublin, and

* A phrase much in use for messages proper to the marrying seasons.

kept him there, occupying his mind to the total exclusion of the perils of Church and State, so long as the election lasted. His tenants, concluding that he "was getting a little reasonable in himself; he was old enough to be good now, an' who knows?" ventured to vote their own way, or not vote at all. And the squire met a more than commonly cordial "welcome home," and many a "hope his Honour's business went the right way!" where, following a different course on his part, silence would have hinted a very unlike thought.

But the cost of such an excursion to a man who loved his money; the irksomeness of such a stay in the city to a squire who was as a fish out of water in the weary streets; a secret consciousness of having thereby deliberately shirked the cause that he hitherto had stood by; nay, this very thankfulness that he felt to be really undue to him, deepened the grudge that he already entertained towards Connor for the doing of what even a low, slow-speaking conscience often had told him ought to be done by him, Connor's landlord.

Some months after the election passed without opportunity of prudently giving breath to this feeling. Then came a fair-day, on which both landlord and tenant were in Farrenstown. The main street was crowded with buyers and sellers of various oddly-associated wares and commodities. Connor was shouldering his way up the street with apparently very little thought upon the matter, but as though by instinct putting up his guard against the horns of distracted cattle, and keeping the *bonnuvs* from between his feet, as Mr.

Garland and a friend, lounging one on each side of a pretty, easy specimen of the now well-known Irish jaunting-car, were slowly making their way down. The people gave place readily enough; but the squire seemed in no haste. Driving himself, the while his servant went upon an errand, he was all affability and accommodatingness. They drew up where a pig stopped the way right in front of a stall by which Connor had stopped to buy a gingerbread husband, the biggest in the fair, for the girleen. The gentlemen were talking political economy.

"‘Yes,’ quoted the stranger, smiling, ‘if you don’t like the country, d—n you, you can leave it!’* And, when one looks around one, one wonders they do not."

"They?" rejoined Mr. Garland, after a moment's pause; "not they, they love it too well! Now, for instance," fixing his eyes on Connor, and at the same time giving him a careless nod to show he recognized him, "one must expect a wonderful love of mother country in the heart of a man who makes his own of his neighbour's child."

The car, freed by the withdrawal of the pig out of his Honour's way, passed on suddenly, leaving Connor open-mouthed with astonishment at the taunt thus flung at him. He walked towards home in at first seeming unconsciousness. But as he went the sting of the speech fastened on him. His face glowed and darkened like a sultry sky lowering to storm. He struck his stick on the

* Emerson's Essays,

ground with every step. Thought followed thought. And when he reached his own door, there was in his countenance a stern anger that his wife never had seen in it before.

Poor little Mary was playing on the threshold. He almost lifted her by her little arm as he put her from his way. He then flung himself into a chair and looked at his wife.

She looked at him, humorously at first, as was her way; then seriously as, to turn away his anger, she said: "What did the girleen do to you?"

"What did she do to me?" repeated he: "sure enough!"

The child drew near and laid her little hand upon his knee, and looked up in expectation of her fairing. He drew her between his knees, and gazed at her.

"Well," he said, "if I love you after this day, God ought to love me."

His wife turned sharp round from some occupation that she had taken in hand, on seeing, as she fancied, his thoughts diverted by the child. She looked frightened at what sounded blasphemy to her ear.

"God forgive you for saying so! Amen," she said, gravely. "What a quare thing for a good Christian to say!"

"I tell you," said Connor, "'t isn't an easy thing to be a good Christian at all times. It put a man to his thrumps, whatever you may think iv it, my good woman."

"An' what thrumps turned up to you to-day, if a body may make bold enough to ask?" enquired Mrs. Kennedy.

"O, thin, the knave o' dimons, of all the cards in the pack," said Connor, with a twinkle of his ordinary humour breaking through his fretfulness. Then, looking down again on the child, he took the gingerbread from his pocket, patted her head, and bade her "make love to him as fast as you can!"

"Well?" suggested Mrs. Kennedy. So he told her his day's adventure.

"That was thrue," he added; "if the devil said it—an' like a devil he looked too. I had that," pointing to the last leg of the lover, "putting in me pocket for her, when the gentlemen dhrew up. He couldn't go very fast; but he didn't thry till his speech was made. He's a long time intending to say that to me. I see it in his eyes many a day, when he hadn't the opportunity to send it home to me. Lord knows I almost swore he'd never say it again."

"God forgive you!" his wife said, gently, seeing that the oath now appeared to him a rash one, better broken than kept, as his catechism could not fail to put him in mind. "It was sin take it, and it would also be sin to keep it." "God forgive us all!" she continued, softly, as she too gazed upon the child.

"When she come there to me, as if o' purpose," said Connor, "I had a good mind to—"

"You hadn't, then," interrupted Johanna; "or, at all events, it wasn't as good a mind as you had the day you tuk her in. My poor little girl—leen! 'Tis over now."

"You're right," said Connor. "Still, whin I think o' what he said, an' the way he said it—"

"Well, it didn't put a hole in your coat, sure, as Father John used to say long ago. If I was you I wouldn't take any notice iv him, no more than if he was a cur-dog that snarled at me. Though he's your landlord he isn't your aquil. Whatever he may say outside, he knows that whin he goes home—an' that frets him—an' there let it!"

"There let it so," repeated Connor, taking the child in his arms, and throwing it up lightly and lovingly, as though with it rose higher and higher his charity to his enemy.

"Whoo! there's the girleen! off she goes; whoo!"

CHAPTER XI.

Many years from this date passed very smoothly with the Girleen. Meanwhile, by that process through which children gather, as from the air they breathe, a knowledge of things that one attempts to keep from them, she divined the secret of her real parentage. The neighbouring gossips, old and young, guessed such to be the case; and asides spoken within her hearing, gradually came to be more loud and less guarded. Some few even amongst the lowest class of village dowagers, dwellers in a hamlet risen round the nearest chapel, might be suspected of thus endeavouring to talk themselves into her favour; for Mary, it was known, never was without some little pocket-

money, and when old enough to take share in the housekeeping at Currahaly, would, it was presumed, have great handling.

"Why then, Nance, isn't she growing up very like the ould misthriss?"

"She's the dead image iv her, my dear. An' prond she may be o' bejn' like her."

"Ah, thin! thrue for you. An' no harm for her if she was like her every way whin she's ould enough an' sensible, an' sees the ups an' downs o' the world."

"O, thin she was very good!"

"Is it the woman that 'ould send the dhry tay to the tinents for fear what they'd get 'ouldn't be good enough for the priests whin she'd hear iv a station published for 'em!"

"Often she did it, an' many another good deed! 'Here, Nance,' she'd say to me iv a day, 'here's a gown, an' 'twill be a change for you, at any rate. An' *that* belongs to it,' drawing something else to her, 'an' we won't part 'em,' she'd say. O, thin 'tis *she* was the good woman. 'An' here,' she'd say of another day, taking six pair of stockings, 'you were always a good warrant to mend an' a nice hand at it, an' mend them for yourself. An' the money for the thread,' she'd say in a whisper, slipping it to me. An' sure there usen't be but a couple o' little holes in 'em that she couldn't put the top iv her little finger through. But she'd always make little o' what she'd be giving. O, thin, 'tis *she* was the good woman. If *she's* like her every way, 'twill be well for her, I promise you. An' certainly she has a ginteel carriage an'

a way with her beyond any iv her comrades—an' always had."

Through snatches of gossip such as this, taken with an occurrence to be noted farther on, Mary was perhaps won at times to feel some small degree of ignorant pride of pedigree. But naturally she was a humble little creature, and a grateful. So false a conceit could but slightly affect her genuine and strong feelings towards her foster-parents. And she was wholly disabused of it by means of a childish quarrel at a writing-school in Farrenstown, to which, in company with all the neighbours' children, boys as well as girls, she went for a time when about fourteen years old. An angry brat one day addressed to her a taunt that gave her an insight of her true social position. Another boy gave this one a sound box for being "the bla'guard to say so!" Of the two sentiments awakened in the girleen's heart by this incident, gratitude to her champion long outlived annoyance at her assailant. Out of the former, indeed, grew the single little secret of her life. A little romance formed round it in her fancy, and lay hidden there awhile. But it never came—never could come to anything. Of all boys there present, her friend was perhaps the only one inspired with a full-grown disgust to the dark line that lay across the poor child's story. The same nicety of feeling in John Brennan was both for and against her; and would as easily have led him to burn the right hand raised in her defence, as to join it to her's at a later period of their lives. Moreover, he happened to have a baby-fancy for another, a girl neither so pretty nor

so pleasing as Mary, but who pleased him. And so poor Mary grew to learn ; and her modest little day-dream quietly and patiently took itself away.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Garland was by custom an early riser. He had heard of a certain old bishop who read all the biographies that he could find of those who had reached a remarkable old age ; and again of a judge wont to examine every aged witness brought before him as to his or her modes of life ; and he had learned that both bishop and judge had ascertained the same singular fact, that whilst the old people differed in nearly all other customs, they agreed in this one, all were early risers. Mr. Garland benefited by this hint. He had no anxiety to better himself in another world. He loved his sweet Cuilraike, and would think twice of exchanging it even for heaven. "He would like to know a little more of that place before-hand," as he said one day to a pressingly pious neighbour. "He had no great opinion of everlasting psalm-singing."

He, notwithstanding, felt at times this life a little weary. Jilted by the lady of his aspirations, (if not of his love,) who at the date of Sally Landy's disappearance from the scene, had received his attentions with encouragement, and had, in fact, well nigh accepted his proposals when herself captured rapidly by a dashing dragoon, he had

retired disgusted from the matrimonial field to pursue his career as a bachelor and a rake. He continued, indeed, to seek the society of his married country neighbours—the friends of the faithless fair included; he went to dinner, ball, and race; hunted, shot, and coursed as ever; he was a man of the world, and a philosopher after his kind. Still he was not what one would call a happy man—far from it. He had no one, not one to love or be loved by. His dependants, he believed, “did not care a rush for him.” His most familiar intimates were hardly friends, old style or new. Thoughts on this face of his position would cross his mind when in the morning he wandered through his grounds, the freshness of these early hours recalling those of youth. Such thoughts, however, seemed to have no purpose in them. Squire Garland was not a man of action.

One day, coming on breakfast hour—as his labourers would say—and after whipping the stream through his demesne to catch, if he might, a trout to grace the meal, he had, rod in hand, come out on the high-road near the bridge, and was leisurely proceeding up-hill towards the gate, when he met the girleen coming down with her school-books and her “middle-day” held under her bib. He recognized her at once; there was something of Sally in her; somewhat more of his own mother. This was his child. He felt—the first time for years—the touch of a true feeling. His heart leaned towards her. He stayed her with—

“Good morrow, little woman!”

"Good morrow, Sir, kindly!" Mary replied, with a pleasant blush.

"How far have you come this fine morning?"

"Only from home, Sir."

"How far is home?" asked Mr. Garland, with a sense of something in the words more than met the child's ear.

"From Connor Kennedy's, Currahaly, Sir."

"And how far are you going?"

"To school, Sir."

"And what are you learning—'The Universal,' I suppose, and 'Read-a-made-aisy?'"

"Yes, Sir."

"Have you come to 'The Principles of Politeness' yet?"

The girleen smiled, and said, "No, Sir."

Seeing that she gladly would escape, Mr. Garland, pinching her ear, dismissed her with a handful of windfalls picked up on passing through the orchard, and a parting "Hope she would turn out to be a good scholar."

If the squire was pleased with this encounter—and he was pleased, and went home and breakfasted heartily under the conviction of having done a good deed—so also was the girleen. It was long before that colour left her cheeks, which the first words of the squire had brought to them. And whenever, and it was often, throughout the day she thought of the morning meeting, her colour would again rise with a sense of pleasure, and new light would come into her quiet young eyes; and she would bend down over till her face almost touched the desk. She told no one of it. Stranger still, although ever and always the most generous

of creatures, she this day hid away in her pocket the Cuilraike apples, and gave not one of them to anybody.

After this Mr. Garland often crossed her way in going to or coming from school. He did not always, nor often, stay to speak with her; never when any third person was within sight or hearing. Sometimes, however, he would intercept her playfully, as on the first occasion, and even make her return some distance with him, if they were going different ways. Once, upon a glowing autumn day, when all his people were absent at a fair, he brought her with him to the garden, gave her the finest plums and pears to eat, bidding her to eat enough but pocket none. Mary was at this time about eleven years old.

What might have come eventually of the growing intimacy and liking of father and daughter, cannot now be told, since the daily opportunities of meeting ceased upon Mary's schoolmaster being obliged to change his dwelling-place for one lying on another road from Currahaly. And it was in long years after, and only to her foster-mother, that Mary mentioned this acquaintanceship that passed away. Yet the squire would now and again ride by Connor Kennedy's with no other view than that of catching a glimpse of the white bib and shining face of his child. He never had the heart to enter the farm-house or its premises. He felt a decent shame of meeting the girleen face to face with Mrs. Kennedy; a feeling which, had she known of it, would have raised him not a little in that good woman's estimation.

CHAPTER XIII.

After the other schooling came the dancing-school, when Mary was a slip of a girl, sixteen or thereabouts. The dancing-master held his class at the houses alternately of the farmers of largest family in the neighbourhood. And but "once in a way," by Connor's wish, "to stir the blood in their old bones," at Currahaly.

On those occasions Mary commonly spent the whole evening away. Sometimes she was conveyed—as is that district phrase—by a party who found a moonlight or twilight walk, but a pleasant prolonging of the evening's sociability. Sometimes she stayed to sleep with the girls of the house when the dance had been kept up too long for a reasonable return home. These short absences just served to make Connor and his colleen dhas aware of how lone their hearth might have become without some such God-send. And when she did come back, which she always took care to do early, "dhropping in with the dew o' the morning to them," as Connor said; she could not, was she twice over their own child, be welcomed more warmly, nor feel more thorough that her place missed her while away.

On one of those evenings, a long midsummer one—for folk of Mary's class will dance whenever they can get the music and the company, Connor and Johanna were together in their kitchen; the servants, boys and girls, being busy in the bawn.

Johanna was finishing the printing of some butter from her last churning.

"I thought you were going to get that cup o' tay for us awhile ago?" Connor said.

"I am going to go for it now."

"Oh, why! going to go, to go."

"'Tisn't worth while taking me hands out o' this."

"Here, then, hand me over that pickpocket o' yours, an' put the tay in it meself."

Johanna reached him the tea-pot.

"Be the law iv arms! as Billix says, my little chaney-taw, I'm able to manage ye now as well as the best iv 'em!" Connor said, as he surveyed the little brown pot.

"You might throw in that spoon, too," Johanna said, surveying his operations with the tea-caddy.

"Sure, Mary isn't to be back?"

"Well, what harum? We can dhrink safe home to her."

"Why, thin," Johanna pursued Connor, as having set the pickpocket in its appointed place upon the hearth to draw, he retook his own, "'twas well it wasn't to snuff you tuk!"

"Pon my word, Connor, I think you are taking to it as kindly yourself," retorted Johanna.

"Mastha, I am I b'lieve," admitted Connor, his eyes twinkling.

"At last lately," continued Johanna. "'Twasn't always so with you an' the pickpocket—though ye're as thick as pickpockets now: I may thank the girleen for that though, I believe."

"You may thank yourself, faix. Very slily you knew how to go about it; sending her to lay the

tay-things, *morya*, whin you might as well send a minikin pin to do it. You knew I couldn't but help her; an' whin I put me own hand in the business, I had nothing for it but to stop me mouth with a cup iv it."

"To take a hair o' the dog that bit you," said Johanna, looking over her shoulder at him.

"Just so. What a man doesn't see whin he's young, 'tisin't aisy to bring him to. Me mother was never guilty of such an extravagance—or at laste if she was she kept it to herself—God rest her soul!"

"Amen! But you see I wouldn't be aisy without giving you your share iv it."

"Well, an' you have your reward for it."

"An you have yours."

"Oh! I'm as ginteel as you plaise now, in the way of taking a cup o' tay; just as if I was born with the silver spoon in me mouth. But the pickpocket is the name for it still, with them that can't afford it. We can, thanks be to God!"

"Amen, thin. But you could just as well afford that much long ago, every bit in the world, as well as—"

"Oh, why! long ago?" interrupted Connor. "I didn't know how many I might have to provide for—now I know."

Johanna half sighed.

"I'm not sorry they're so few," pursued Connor, cheerfully. "God knows what's best for us. May be if He sent us children 'tisin't to help us to the cup o' tay they would, or the bit o' mait aither. We're as well off as we are, ma colleen

dhas. Let people think what they will. God knows best afther all.

"Suppose I had a son, now," he continued, musingly, "afther raring an' caring, an' schooling him all his life, may be I'd be fool enough—I'd be soft enough for it I'm afraid—to give him a hard hould on the land. An' the land 'ould want the money to work it; an' 'twouldn't be aisy to keep a close grip iv it on him, an' so many fine new-fangled things to do 'ith it; an' the crops bringing it in again, as every one 'ould say. An' we'd have a daughter-in-law in the coorse o' time, an' the coorse o' nature. An' then, ma colleen dhas, we'd be only the ould couple in the corner; an' may be no great wish to keep us long there. As it is I can dance a horn-pipe on me own floore, an'

"Phew-phew, phew-phew, phew-phew, phew-phew, phew-phew, phew, phew, phew!"

Catching his wife's hand as he whistled the tune, he turned round merrily, keeping time to it; she falling into the measure after the first moment. They danced as though the sudden rise of feeling had made them young again. Then, recollecting the probable incoming of the servant girls and boys from the bawn, both stopped and looked towards the door-way. But there was only the broad sunshine streaming from the low hills opposite across the quiet fields. Throwing themselves upon the settle, they laughed together till their sides ached at "the start that tuk 'em." But tender thoughts mingled with their mirth; for Johanna put her apron to her eyes after a while, and Connor kept looking at her as though

someway or other he would like to join her in a tear or two if he knew how.

"Glory be to God!" he said, "we're best off as we are, I b'lieve; eh, me ould girl? Come now an' let us have this little dhrop at all evints."

CHAPTER XIV.

Valentines, forsaking courts, have ere now wandered into the country, and come to hang their couplets on the Irish furze,* and *déjeûners-à-la-fourchette*, have found their way into our Irish farm houses, and have come to over-rule the roast at our Irish rural weddings. Yet, in the main, our matches are made as they were centuries since. And, as a people, we cleave to the patriarchal mode of marriage-making, as though it had descended to us with the Israelitish blood that some believe runs through our Milesian veins. There do, indeed, occur courtships long as Jacob's, and as loving; but, like Jacob's, these are the exceptions. And, ordinarily, you have but to take one of those transactions, translate the

* The *Athin Gaelach*, our indigenous furze, differs from the Scotch. It is less of a bush, more of a shrub in character and outline: its thorns longer and less stubborn; its branches slenderer, more like the broom—for which at a short distance it might be mistaken; it trembles to the wind like so many more sensitive things of Irish growth. The Scotch furze, making a thicker fence, is now more grown, and has come to be more Irish than the Irish. One might to-day traverse acres of brake and not meet one bush of *Athin Gaelach*.

Scripture that approves it to the ear: "He took for his son a wife of the daughters of Jeremiah;" into the more familiar Irish of, "He married his boy to a girl o' the Meanys;" then mark the making and closing of the bargain, the wedding and the hauling-home; and if you glance quickly over some of the details, it will bring you back in fancy to the dusky eastern evening that brought Eliezer to the house of Bathuel, the son of Nachor, in Mesopotamia.

All reverence for those patriarchs notwithstanding, we used to have an ardent longing to see those matters managed in quite a different way. We never passed an Advent or Shrovetide of our young days in the country, that there did not grow the stronger on us an intolerance of what we chose to fancy an inhuman traffic. But time has taught us that when a system shows so much of good and so little of evil in the working out, it may be wise to think twice before even wishing to change it; and that, keeping one's own feelings and fancies for one's own self, it may be but kind to let other folk make themselves happy or unhappy in the way they will.

Unhappy, no doubt, sometimes are the marriages made bargain-wise by Paddy and Tade for Ned and Nano; a wonder is how seldom. Wonder? A miracle almost! What stronger proof can be that the grace of God is with our Church, and through it with our people, than is offered in the marriages so made? Here are people, with the ordinary share of human frailty, brought and bound together seemingly at hap-hazard, without a shade of personal preference; but with the

one saving circumstance of the simple good intention that fits them for the grace of the sacrament in which they are made one! And yet so rarely as to show but the rule-proving exceptions do these unions end in disunion; not in one case in a hundred thousand in separation; not in one of a million in aught worse.

And so this system holds, Advent after Advent, Shrovetide after Shrovetide: growing, year in, year out, through the customs and habits of a most tradition-loving people. And so one must take it and treat it, for better for worse, when it comes across one's story.

One day, during the spring of the second famine year, Connor Kennedy returned from Farrenstown later than was his wont on the market days of that gloomy and half-idle time.

"I got a thrait on your account to-day, my girleen," he said to Mary.

"From who?" asked Johanna.

"'From who?'" repeated Connor.

"What about, Sir?" asked Mary.

"To know if you remembered how near it was to Shrove."

"O!" said Mary, turning aside her head.

"'O!' what colour is red now? An' from a neighbour o' yours, too; though I suppose you wouldn't know him; because o' the big bounds-ditch between you, you know?"

"I would know him, Sir; though indeed I don't know much of him."

"Well, it depends on yourself to improve your acquaintance with him."

"An' were you talking iv it in airnest to him?" asked Johanna.

"O, no! 'twas all in a joke. What else 'ould it be? Sure the little girls o' those days don't think o' marriage at all, at all. What a quare woman you are not to know that!"

"Why, then," Mary said, gathering courage to say something; "if it was nothing else, father, isn't this a queer time to be thinking o' such things? When there's nothing doing in the country, an' the neighbours in such—"

"Pchut!" said Connor; "if you have nothing else to say against it—isn't that the very thing the ould song advises us :

'Sure 'tis then I will get married,
Whin I've nothing else to do,
Whin I've nothing else to do ;
An' 'tis then I will get married,
Whin I've nothing else to do?'"

"Why, thin," said Johanna, who in her heart shared Mary's objection to the time, "I wondher was there ever sitch a man, to be said an' led by what a song says!"

"I'm said an' led," replied Connor, "by a fine sound farm o' land, an' a bawn o' cows that's as good as your own, or next to it, an' a clain, clever, likely boy, a dacent father an' mother's child. Where 'ould you get a betther offer, or wan that 'ould keep her so near to you? An' if she didn't take him now, may be 'tis the how he wouldn't wait for her, good as she is; an' good

she is, mo Colleen dhas dhow!"* he added, stroking Mary's smooth brown hair as she stooped to look at something cooking by the fire.

"Why, thin, that's thrue," said Johanna; and she said no more.

Mary said nothing. But she went into her own little room, and sat on her bed's foot, and shed a tear or two. Her feelings and impulses were so mixed and contradictory that she could not find a sensible word to say one way or the other. Finally, she knelt down where she had knelt morning and evening, through so many years of care and kindness, before the little child's altar, with crucifix and homely prints, and there offered up her prayers, and resolved to do what seemed to her view "a good daughter's duty, and leave what was to come to God an' His Holy Mother."

No more was said of the matter in the way of question; and no more in any wise just then. Mary was called to her dinner, and, if that was possible, helped to more than ordinary; though with a sense of her needing, rather than an expectation of her eating it.

* "Pretty brown (i.e. brown haired) girl." The name of one of our merriest jigs.

CHAPTER XV.

The following day, it seemed a matter of course that Connor was to go to Farrenstown. Johanna and he sat talking awhile in the parlour before he went; and, as Mary came in, she just caught the end of the conversation.

"Which o' the Scrowtheas would he give you?" asked Johanna.

"Aft'her a dail o' talk, the ould fogie 'ould give us our choice."

"If I was you, Mary, I'd take the lower wan," Johanna said, in a half jesting tone. "Of course the young man would be said by you."

"I suppose he knows his juty as well as another," said Connor to his Colleen dhas.

"Well, sure if it isn't to be it won't be," Johanna said, consolingly, seeing Mary's eyes fill up. "Marriages are made in heaven, my heart, though your father wont b'lieve that."

"I'll b'lieve mine was made there," Connor said; "an' if that isn't enough for you, 'tis harder to please you now than it used to be long ago, mo Colleen dhas."

"If it's a thing that it goes on, it won't be like parting you at all, *alanna mo chree*," Johanna said to Mary, when Connor had gone off. "Another year, may be it's miles an' miles you'd be going from us; an' we all alone here aft'her you. An' the best father an' mother's house you were

ever in isn't like having a house o' your own, Mary, after all."

Mary sighed softly, and looked round her as though foreboding that this was the best house that she was like ever to be in.

"An' if anything was to happen to your father—the cross o' Christ between him an' all harum!"

"Oh! then Amen," said Mary.

"Amen, *a-Hierna!*" added Johanna, crossing her hands and looking up; "we should reflect, child, that there are them that 'ould think they had a claim upon his mains, an' wouldn't like to laive 'em to you, or me aither, may be, much of 'em. Now there's no wan to say again his doing what he likes by you, an' giving you your fortune. Many a good pound iv it you helped to win yourself, my heart; an' that's a proud thing for a girl to know when it comes to her turn to get it." As she said this, Johanna suddenly dropped the work in her hand, kissed Mary hastily, and, with her apron to her eyes, walked out into the bawn, brown, bare, and lonely at that time of year and day, and sat down by the gap where the little boy had brought her the paper with Mary's name on it eighteen years ago.

"I little thought," she said, half aloud, "what a comfort an' credit was coming to me house that day. 'Tis you were the good girl, Mary!"

Mary, within doors, sat still a little while. She thought of her now proposed bridegroom's share in a certain school-quarrel of old times, which, as children, had estranged them; and in later years had, from habit though rather than design, "made her shy of him," to a degree that, unsuspectedly,

had not a little qualified the neighbourliness of the Kennedy and Meany families. Slowly, while she thought, the colour deepened on her cheeks from pink to rosy, and half-angry red, and slowly shaded off again. It looked to her, indeed, like fate, working within the bounds assigned it by Johanna, of marriages being made in heaven: that this young man's father should be the very first to make an offer at match-making with hers. Suddenly she said, looking round her and half-smiling, "I never was bold meself, I suppose? Sure 'twould be folly to talk o' such a thing now, if I could do it; an' I could as soon put me hand into that fire! May be he forgot all about it long an' long ago. What is it but like a dream to meself now? An', if it is a thing it is to be, I musn't ever let on that I remember that. That's the best course I can take.

"An' no thanks to me," she concluded, after a moment, "to forgive an' forget that, out an' out; an' if 'twas more than that, if it was only for God's sake: I that never from that day to this got a hard word from man or mortal!"

Then, her heart swelling high with grateful love for Connor and Johanna, and for God, who put it in their hearts to do what they did, she rose and briskly finished the business that her mother had laid down. Then, taking from the top of the coop a sieve kept there for the feeding of the fowl, and putting in it a good handful of oats, she went out, and with a simple-artful "thuck! thuck! thuck!" she drew within hearing of Johanna, who, as she expected, joined her and the hens where the farm-yard opened to the bawn.

Coming thence, calmed down into her every-day humour, and as though she had only been seeing "by the way o' no harm," that the cows were where they should be, the Colleen dhas stood by Mary till the ever-eating brood had picked up their last grain; and then both women returned to the house as composedly as though Mary were to go on with the household little affairs for ever and a day. But one who had met them constantly would note that oftener than had been her wont Johanna addressed her companion as "Mary, child."

Connor returned from town that afternoon later than he had that of the day before. But he came home in high good humour. Old Jerry Meany, father of the boy, had struck to him on all points; but just offering so much opposition as made it a triumph to overbear him. The match was made. The fortune that Connor named for Mary would have constrained her in very gratitude to please him, had she even a substantial objection so to do. Preparations for the wedding, hurried by the shortness of the time between then and Shrovetide, filled both head and hands. And the girleen found herself upon the eve of marriage without opportunity to guess (except from hearsay) whether in the man whom she was to take for better, for worse, the one or the other was likely to be predominant.

CHAPTER XVI.

"You gave Cauth a bad habit—doing too much for her," Johanna said to Mary, as the little party sat together the night before the wedding. "I declare she knows little more than when she came here, in the way of dhressing anything!"

"Except herself," added Connor. "An' she didn't require much taiching for that."

"I'm afeared to lave anything in her han's while the mass is going on to-morrow."

"Sure there wont be much to be looked after, then," Mary said.

"Everything 'ould want to be ready when the mass is over, for fear the priests 'ould be in any hurry."

"Wont Billix be here?" asked Connor. "An' doesn't he know how to do everything?"

"O! indeed, Mary asked him herself. I believe he was the only one she asked."

"No; I asked John Brennan, too, or at laste I told me father to ask him for the sake of old times," Mary said.

"Billix had great opportheunities, certainly, in an' out iv all the grand houses in the counthry," said Johanna. "Billix does know how things ought to be done. But tisin't that alone: but 'ould Mrs. Meany 'ill be staying below,* I suppose,

* *i. e.*, in the kitchen, or "the room;" that is, the bedroom of the women of the house; "*above*" being the parlour.

till they're married; and may be she'll be expecting me to keep her company."

"An' sure 't isn't to leave me alone you would, mother?" said Mary.

"You needn't be afeared to laive her to Canth, anyway," put in Connor; "she's able to take care iv herself, I promise ye. Well, for your new cap—if you had it on—that she didn't hear you call her ould?"

"Well, an' sure I oughtn't aither; whatever another may do. I'm getting ould meself."

"Ould or young, you'll be at the marriage to-morrow, plaise God, an' in your best bib an' tucker, too," said Connor. "Be ready for the mass in time, both o' ye, let me see; an' don't let the ould dowager catch ye down about the house at all. There's no need to offend any wan; an' her especially, on Mary's account. If I don't mistake her greatly, she'd keep it in her nose for ye longer than she would a pinch o' snuff."

"May be 'twould be better for me stay with her?"

"Pon my word you won't! An' that's as good as if I said pon me soukins."

"Well, well; let it be so why 'A wilful man will have his way,' they say."

"O! say so. Whin all you wanted was to be prevailed on."

Johanna laughed; and, this moot point being settled, she proceeded to lessen Canth's responsibilities by making some of the minuter arrangements towards the good cheer of the morrow.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Why, Ma'am!" Cauth exclaimed, as early on the wedding morning the mistress entered the kitchen to make the last preparations for the coming breakfast which were to leave so little to the discretion of the maid; "if you're to b'lieve Billix here, they never put a dhrisheen* on the pan at Father Cantillon's."

"It would be a quare thing to tell a lie about," responded Johanna; "good morrow, Billix."

"Good morrow, Mrs. Kennedy, an' good luck! an' the best o' good wishes to you an' yours to-day morning."

"An' I'm sure," Johanna added, as she turned towards Cauth, "Billix wouldn't wish to disgrace our house-keeping to-day, of all days in the year."

"You may say that, Ma'am, an' sure 'twas that you might have the last fashion I made bould to interfere whin I see Cauth putting the frying-pan ready to her hand."

"An' so they never fry 'em?" Johanna said, willing to be further informed, yet perhaps not willing to say as much, especially as Cauth stood still, to hear further, too.

* Drisheen is a sort of sausage, (made with sheep's blood and milk, flavoured with jansy). It is peculiar to South Munster, and especially used in Cork city.

"The priest's sisther says it makes 'em poor an' wathery."

"Well, she comes from Cork, an' ought to know best: live an' learn, Billix."

"She takes it up this way, be the cord that ties the two ends," explained Billix, "an' pricks it here an' there on the two sides with a fine needle, to keep it from burstin' in the boil; an' then she puts it down."

"In cold wather, he says," interrupted Cauth.

"In cold wather," repeated Billix, emphatically; "an' when the water comes to boil, she turns her little glass, an' the very boilin' iv an egg she gives it. An' she has'em so that 'twould delight you to look at 'em. Father Delany gave it up to her of all he see sence he came to this part iv the country for doing 'em."

"Well, we'll try to do our best ourselves," Johanna said; "an' plaise the priests at any rate. Cauth, go bring me a fine needle off the table in the room."

Cauth disappeared into the apartment which still in household parlance kept its old name, notwithstanding that many years had passed since Connor had added a comfortable parlour, and pleasant little bedroom for Mary, to the original model tenant-farmer's steading: the kitchen for use by all and sundry during daytime, and the room for ditto ditto at night.

"Why then, Billix," Johanna said, as they two were thus left together for a moment, "I never asked you from that day to this what share you had in sending her to us that's going away from us to-day; but now 'tis all past and gone, I say to you,

God bless you for it, whether 'twas little or much."

"I see meself," Billix said, "you 'ouldn't give me the satisfaction, as a body may say, of putting the question to me; an' 'twas well you didn't; I was on me good behaviour not to tell. For all that though I b'lieve I was the first that gave you, without intending it, the first insight into—"

"Into what is as good let lie where it is," interposed Johanna.

"I recollect," resumed Billix, "as if it happened yesterday, the look you giv me when it slipped from me to call her the little Posy, that's the flower o' the parish now. 'Never,' says you to me, 'let me hear you use such a name to a creature that got a proper wan in the holy waters o' baptism.' Still," added Billix, with a look that made Johanna laugh despite herself, "still an' all I thought to meself you worn't sorry to get the wind o' the word that sure I suppose nobody would think of but meself."

"Well, Billix, we wont go back on old stories now. But many a time, believe you me, I bought a rabbit from you, when I could put something else in the pot, for sake o' that morning that I had me doubts about."

"An' many a time," returned Billix, "I lit you mak a hard bargain with me for that same sake, believe you me, Mrs. Kennedy. 'Tisn't but you often would mak it up with me in other ways," he added, as Cauth, in answer to her mistress's hasty call, "Of what on earth was keeping her below there?" re-appeared and made further reference to bygones inexpedient.

"Now, Ma'am," Billix said, when the needle

had, under his supervision, been duly used, "if you laive the doin' o' that to me, I'll undertake to mind it and have it done to a turn. I'll count three minutes as well as—"

"You need not, thin," interrupted Cauth, who possibly was piqued whilst relieved by the trust thus devolved on Billix; "we're not without a three minute hour-glass here, any more than other people."

"Bring it hether, then," said Billix, "an' when I turn it for the dhrisheen, do you pop down your eggs, an' we'll be ready to a T to send all up when the mass is over."

"Come, come, and leave 'em to themselves!" called Connor, from the house-door. "Here's the clerk up the borheen with the basket, an' he'll want to lay the altar. You can't be Mary an' Martha this morning, an' do your big best, mo Colleen dhas. An' now," he added, as she passed him on going to the parlour, "keep the door shut or you'll be caught, may be."

Old Mrs. Meany did not, however, arrive till the marriage-mass was in course of celebration. She was then urgently pressed by Cauth to "take her seat in the room," but humbly chose to stay where she was, in the kitchen. There her keen and silent observation cowed Cauth, so that but for the help and countenance of Billix she would have done very ill indeed the little left for her to do. At length, everything else being done, or doing itself, and so needing no supervision for the moment, the girl, seemingly impelled by the watch upon her, to keep doing something, went to the hen-coop and took from it one hen.

"Here, Billix!" she called softly, "help me to tie this wan."

"To be sure," responded Billix, stepping from the fire-place.

"O, bother you for a hen! she's making too much noise. Come out here till we have her in the basket."

Billix stepped after her from the back-door into the farm-yard.

"I wish she'd take her eyes o' me!" Cauth exclaimed. "Dear knows I'm not sorry Miss Mary isn't to live in wan house 'ith her, the ould shaver."

"Yerra, the likes iv her is always so!" returned Billix. And, with his disengaged hand, making a motion to carry out the words, he sang softly to Cauth:

"Do you get a hatchet, an' I'll get a saw,
An' we'll chop off the head o' my mother-in-law!"

"Here, now," Cauth said, "don't make me laugh any more, or may be she'd say Miss Mary is as great a skit as I am."

"The dear young 'oman 'ont have much to do 'ith her if she'll take a hint from her friends. Tell me what are you going to do 'ith this?"

"'Tis the way, we're sending her over before Miss Mary. Herself (meaning Mrs. Kennedy) thought she'd like to find something from home before her at Scrothea; an' this hin was a great pet with her."

"Here! 'tis all right now. In with you, or

the dhirisheen 'ill be boiling too soon; an' that 'ouldn't, Cauthileen, my good girl."

"I suppose you often see some o' them?" Cauth said, as together they re-entered the kitchen.

"What sort are they, why? tell me an' I'll tell you."

"The rail Scotch-in-Chinas. She'll lay her two eggs in the day for you, while e'er a kin in the place keeps layin'."

Billix looked at her—that is to say, at her who had said this.

"'Pen my word she will!"

"D'you tell me so in earnest?"

"Why, thin, indeed, 'tis myself is in great humour for joking this morning. Lonesome enough I feel for poor Miss Mary"—

"Sure enough they shewed me some o' thim same of a day over at Sir George's; but I thought 'twas making game o' me they wor, for a poor Paddy; mostly English servants they have there, an' I wouldn't give 'em the satisfaction of letting 'em see whether I b'lieved 'em or not. An' you tell me she'll lay two in the day! Are the eggs any way sizeable?"

"Fine eggs; there's some of 'em there."

"Eger! she's great value for a hen. Mitty Matty's hen wasn't a patch on her."

"She isn't too good for her that's getting her," Cauth said with emphasis. "A better young 'oman never left a father and mother's house. I never see a black look nor a cross word from her; an' I'm three years on the floore with her: an' that isn't a bad thrial iv a body. Whatever way you'll

take her you'll find her always the same, as gentle as a lamb." And Cauth put her apron to her eyes, and sobbed most unaffectedly.

"Be the law of arms, 'tis over!" exclaimed Billix, who had drawn near the parlour door whilst Cauth was speaking what he rightly judged to be meant rather for Mrs. Meany's ear than his. "Down 'ith the eggs—fair an' aisy though—an' don't mind the tears till you have time to take out your lace pocket-han'kerchief. Now, be the very moment they can set to table we'll be ready to wait on 'em. Do you put the eggs half way between the ham and the roast turkey at wan side o' the table, an' I'll put this facing you upon the other. An' then Sir George himself couldn't desire a bettther breakfast if he was going to be married again."

Here the parlour door opened; the pleasant-sounding bustle following the solemnity became fully audible, as Johanna hurried down to welcome and bring up Mrs. Meany. The bridegroom also came forth; but as rather to escape the uneasiness of staying in one place or one position, than with any other view: so he lingered near the doorway.

"John Meany has good features; still, he's not altogether a beauty for my money," Billix said, half to himself and half to Cauth.

Cauth's glance followed sharply after that of Billix; but she had the honour of the house too close to heart to own that she knew of more promising countenances in the parish.

Singularly unlike his father, who was a burly, blue-eyed, apple-cheeked old man, John Meany

showed a dark and almost colourless complexion. And his features were of that thin and rather finely cut outline that—in the marked absence of refinement—sometimes gives a cast of countenance which sinister is perhaps too strong a word for, but which certainly is less pleasing to the eye than is the broader type that goes naturally with the broad hand of toil. When one meets such in a poor man, one instantly feels that no other can look so poor indeed.

In passing to the parlour with Johanna his mother stopped to kiss and wish him joy, and they went in all three together; Johanna speedily returning to give the signal for serving up breakfast.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The party sat down to table. The parish-priest was placed at the head. Johanna and the curate faced Connor and the bride. John Meany fixed himself at a corner of the board, and on the edge of his chair, and looked very sheepish and uncomfortable; and, Cauth thought just then, though the word did not escape her lips, "very much of a sleeveen." The elder Meanys had places of honour assigned them, such as seemed next best to the priests. John Brennan, by Johanna's invitation, made "room for himself near his old school-fellow." And the neighbours in general drew in their chairs and made themselves as small as possible.

"We saw the day, gentlemen," Connor said to the priests, when Father Delany had in few words asked a blessing on the meal, "an' 't isn't so long ago, that ye couldn't spare time to give us the pleasure o' your company upon a Shrovetide morning."

"And you'll see it again, Connor, please God!" replied Father Delany. "The bad times will pass away, as we shall ourselves. There will be good years in Ireland again. Though I may not live to see them, and probably shall not."

"God forbid, Sir!" said Johanna. "I see no reason why you shouldn't, if they come at all, as surely I hope they will. Here, Cauth, hand that to Father Delany: an' easy now."

"Except the very good one, Johanna"—(to Cauth). "Thank you, my good girl—that I've seen so many before."

"Not so many but that I trust you'll see many more, Sir."

"Amen to that!" said Connor. "But what 'ould you think o' Mrs. Meany," glancing at the girleen—"I beg your pardon, Ma'am," to the old woman; "but there are two o' ye now."

"And God keep us there!" said Mrs. Meany, looking at her daughter-in-law, who smiled bashfully.

"But had half a notion o' not getting married this year, because there wasn't a wedding at every corner, eh, John?" continued Connor.

John looked down, and twirled a teaspoon in his fingers, saying not a word.

"It was only half a notion, I suppose," said

Father Delany, "ha! ha! ha! eh, Mary, my child?"

But Father Cantillon spared Mary the difficulty of reply. "That," he said with a boyish, kind smile, "would be a bad way of mending matters for us."

"You know, Sir, there are two ways o' going about mending matters," Connor said, "an' young people don't always know which is which."

"Come, now," said Father Delany, "let the young people alone. I said so much to them myself this morning, that they ought not need a lecture from anybody else for some time to come."

"For a year and a day," suggested John Brennan, Mary's champion in the old-times school, and now himself a school-master under the so-called "National Board."

"Till they bring the pot from Araglin, eh?" said Father Cantillon. "But we're not letting them alone after all. How have the potatoes been with you, Mr. Kennedy?"

"Gone intirely, Sir."

"An' 'tis gone intirely, I'm afeard they are," said old Jerry Meany. "An' the more's the pity, for 'twould be hard to match 'em."

"You may say that," put in Billix, in an under tone, from behind.

"They're crying them down now as the cause of all the misfortunes of the country," said John Brennan. "If we have had needy and bad landlords, and worse agents, rack-rents, and tithes, a warfare of races, and creeds, and classes, from generation to generation, 'twas all because of the potato. That's the last theory; and a nice com-

fortable one it is, as it relieves bad government and party legislation, the oppressors of the poor and the sowers of discord between class and class, of the responsibility of their acts. And, believe me, the discovery wont go unrewarded."

"Do you take care of yourself, John," said Father Cantillon, significantly.

"You wouldn't count a gray head under the big-wigs up in Dublin, if they were hearing to you," said Connor.

"I'm not very likely to do that, in any case," returned the school-master. "Few of us are, I should think. But it may prove, in the long run, that we can do without the big-wigs better than the big-wigs without us."

"But," resumed Father Cantillon, "it is quite true, John, that landlords and middle-men could not have rack-rented to the same extent but for the potato; nor, again, could the poor have multiplied so fast but for the same. So far, then, the theory is sound."

"Throe for your reverence," said Connor. "'Twas the pitaties fed the labourers an' paid the wages; an' fed the pigs that paid the rent—or went far to do it. I dun know what the poor man will do at all 'ithout 'em: nor thim that aren't poor all out, too."

"They must do as best they can, relying upon Providence," said Father Delany. "If Almighty God, in His wisdom, takes away the potato from us, He may send us something better."

"Why, thin, 'twould set Him," interrupted Billix.

"Is that you, Billix?" asked the parish priest,

startled at this speech, whilst Father Cantillon looked round to see the speaker.

"It is meself, Father Delany, for want o' betther."

"What's that you said?"

"'Twouldn't be Billix if it wasn't something quare," said Connor.

"I'm obliged to you, Mr. Kennedy."

"Billix himself is always obliging to us," said Johanna, turning from a whispered conference with Cauth.

"Well, gentlemen," Connor said, "I saw a sthrange sight about three weeks ago. I was coming along the road, and just as I got to my own bounds, where the two little fields o' Paddy Quinlan's are—you know 'em, Sir?" to Father Delany.

"Time for me, Connor—"

"I saw in wan o' the two a thick white fog, like; but 'twas more like a cloud, 'twas so substantial, as you might say: you'd raelly think you could cut it. Well, gentlemen, it was settled down on the wan field—"

"And none of it on the fields near?"

"Not a bit; no more than on that hand. When suddenly, as if it had its business done—glory be to God! but that was the thought come into me head—it riz up an' went over the ditch slowly, slowly, but altogether, 'ithout a break in it; an' it settled down upon the next in the very same way. With the quareness iv it an' the smell it had it almost frightened meself."

"Really, it was an almost awful sight," said Father, Cantillon.

"We live in quare times, Sir. Well, there's no use in being melancholy over 'em—to-day at any rate."

"You'll be lonesome afther Mary?" said very slowly and very softly, a Job's comforter-like guest, who "would not crowd the table" during the first round of tea, and who only now, and in answer to Johanna's repeated nods and becks, consented to edge in between her and her next neighbour.

"Why, thin indeed, I b'lieve Connor 'ill be more so of the two," replied Johanna.

"But when you have the grand-children scampering over to you," said Father Cantillon.

"Whisht! your reverence, if you please, Sir," whispered Johanna.

Father Cantillon looked surprised; but did "whisht" at once.

CHAPTER XIX.

"When Mrs. Meany, junior, has done fiddling with her breakfast, for she's not eating—eat, child, or you can't work!—we must get somebody to cheer us with a song," said Father Delany. "It would not be a wedding without a song."

"Not the sorte o' weddin' your reverence 'ould like," said Billix, softly, as he reached Cauth a cup and saucer to give to her mistress.

"I'm glad to see you making yourself useful, Billix."

"Why, then indeed," Billix said, "your reverence always showed that you wor glad to see me."

"I always did like to see people cheerful—enjoying themselves in an innocent way. I say, John Brennan!"

"Well, Father Delany?"

"I'm told you have a song of your own that has gone the round of the country; though your parish-priest has not heard it yet. Sing it now, like a good fellow."

"'The Sober Topper, or Paddy from Cork's praise of good liquor?'" said Connor, by way of introduction. "Come, now, throw it off your heart, man!"

"And give it to us honestly—every word of it," said Father Delany; "for I'm told we're in it."

"What good is anything where the clargy aren't?" asked the poet. And then he sang with much spirit:

"Come, here's to wise an' 'ould Tommy Walker!
The 'Glin' an' 'Wathercourse,' an' Craimy
'Green,'
To 'Murphy,' 'Daly' an' fine-flavoured 'Magnier,'
An' the best of all of 'em the pure *potheen*!"

"The natest crature it is good liquor,
Whin the hait o' youth by age is mollified;
'Tis rich an' mellow, like the fat o' bacon,
A guinea-yellow finely clarified."

"There's wine an' brandy, an' rum an' Hollands,
But upon the palate the best will pall;
While here's the liquor, just like the praties,
Meets every fancy an' is good for all."

“ An’ if you’re hungry, for the want o’ victuals,
 ’Twill take the edge off your appetite ;
For it’s mait an’ cabbage, it is drink and clothing,
 The best o’ covering both by day an’ night.

“ An’ saving your presence !—

“ It’s shirt an’ shift, too, ’tis coat an’ waistcoat,
 ’Tis gown an’ petticoat an’ breeches both ;
It suits all ages an’ aich condition :
 Laymin an’ clargy, you may take your oath.

“ On all occasions, both late an’ airly,
 When the child is christened an’ the match is
 made,
At wake an’ wedding, with grief or laughter,
 ’Tis the same convainience, au’ the soul o’
 thrade.

“ O, there’s nothing like it, nor second to it,
 In cure surpassing all the docthor’s skill ;
It’s the only eye-wather an’ the best o’ lip-salve,
 An’ well or ailing you may take a spill.

“ An’ for a could, if ’tis punch is plaising,
 The apothecary compounds it right :
The finest physic to stop the phthisic—
 The mail that thravels both by day an’ night.

“ Let priest an’ parson call it fraud an’ arson—
 ’Tis aisy praiching over cake an’ tay—
Don’t they take their gomor by themselves at
 home, or
 With sober topers where the grave are gay ?

"The judges high upon the binch o' justice,
The lawyers plaiding at the bar o' strife,
Turnkays an' jailers are all sons o' liquor ;
For Law an' Liquor they are man an' wife.

"'Tis it makes the peeler, so jovial tendher,
Go to coort an' capture the young roguish maid,
It send a so'gering aich nate young fellow ;
An' blinds the bailiff to his ugly thrade.

"It's the rael sthrong wather that delights the
sayman,
O' the Royal Navy an' likewise Marine ;
'Tis it gives spirit to the soldier valiant,
An' fires the haro, like a magazine.

"'Tis flowing poethry an' fine delusion,
The sthrain where fancies so delightful float.
The best musician must clear his whistle,
An' here's the liquor o' the highest note.

"'Tis last an' lapstone to the bould shoemaker ;
An' of the tailor sure it makes a man.
'Twas it made Sarsfield an' Curran glorious,
An' both their betthers, great O'Connell Dan.

"An' if it brings the young girls to ruin,
An' men an' women to the gallows-thrap,
Why, more power to liquor ! we'll dhrink it
quicker,
Short life an' merry, then pull down the cap !"

"Let him take it whom the cap fits," said Father Cantillon.

"Cap-ital!" cried Father Delany.

"It is too long except for where it was intended to represent the singer, the tap-room," John Brennan said, modestly, when the clapping had subsided to the after-clap.

"I hear forty-eight verses iv a song a day there was a picnic out in Glas-ruah," remarked Billix, from the background.

"Well, there wasn't wan more in it, Billix," returned Connor.

"No, Mr. Kennedy; there was not wan more iv it."

"And that looks somewhat of an anachronism in the chorus," continued the schoolmaster to the curate. "'Walker' and 'Magnier' are not spirits of this day; I put them in to please my father, in whose day they flourished."

"But they are representatives of the tap-room time past, I trust, as you say," rejoined Father Cantillon. "And Tommy Walker has got the widest notoriety of any."

"And Magnier we had hereabouts twenty or thirty years ago."

"Yes; that was what we used to dhrink when this woman here was putting her come-hether on me," Connor said.

"Only for it you wouldn't have come round him, I suppose," said Father Cantillon, laughing.

"O, indeed I have raison to remember it," said Johanna. "He met me an' three or four more with me—young girls then—of a day at the fair o' Farrenstown, Sir; an' he pressed us very hard

to take a thrate from him. Long afther he told me that the dickens a wan o' me (an' twasn't the dickens he said then) 'ould ever be Johanna Kennedy if I tuk the glass o' sperits from him that day."

"Lucky for you that you did not!" said the curate.

"Oh! 'tis hard to say that, Sir," said Johanna, with the spirit that really caught Connor sparkling in her eyes: "there's as good fish in the say as ever was caught, you know."

"'Tisn't every day you'd catch such a quare fish as me, though," said Connor.

"O, indeed I believe you in that."

By and by, when the bride was out of hearing of what might pass in Johanna's neighbourhood, Johanna said to Father Cantillon, "I b'lieve, sir, you thought Mary was my daughter."

"Certainly, I did. I did not know that Mr. Kennedy was married before."

"An' he was not, sir. She's neither child of his nor mine."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Father Cantillon.

Johanna told him the facts. His eyes glistened as he followed out the story: admiring meanwhile the pastoral simplicity surrounding her and her Connor.

"'Twas a great act, Mrs. Kennedy," he said.

"Why thin, indeed sir, we had our reward for it, if it was. Connor laid down his two hunderd pounds for her today: an' the Lord knows (that knows everything) that we gev it from the heart out. No parents ever had a child that was betther to 'em than you, Mary, wor to us. I can't

talk of her," continued Johanna, her voice faltering, and putting her hand to her eyes: "but may God bless her, an' give her good children iv her own."

"Amen!" said Father Cantillon heartily. His knowledge of the world was not very various or very deep, but his sympathies were more so than is common; and so he said no more, he offered no condolence.

"All the parish knows what I told you, sir; though no wan of 'em ever brought it up to her, nor wouldn't any more than if she was their own. An' I thought it bett'her you should know it too. Some time or other you might say something before her that might give her to feel."

"I'd be sorry to do that, Mrs. Kennedy."

"I know you would, sir. But, indeed, putting *that* out o' question, I wouldn't like she'd be reminded iv it at all, for fear she'd get shy iv us, any way now she's gone from us."

"Well," called Father Delany from across the room, "I think it is about our time of day now, Father Maurice. Good bye, Mary, my child. I wish you many a happy day till you see weddings as pleasant as this in your own house, if 'tis God's will."

"An' many of 'em!" added Connor, "if your reverence has no objection."

"Many thanks to you, sir, and to Father Cantillon, for the pleasure o' your company," Johanna said, as she followed the priests to the house door, where stood their horses ready, by order of John Brennan, to whom Father Cantillon had beckoned significantly some short time before.

"That's a very nice young man, that Father Cantillon," Johanna said to Connor when the dispersing of the party, after departure of the bride and bridegroom, had left man and wife alone, and they sat together by the fire as in the evenings of the old, old times before Mary's days. "I declare to you but he seemed to feel as much for us at parting that poor girl. I could see it by him, though he didn't say it."

"I'd b'lieve it the more," returned Connor. "'Tisn't. 'You'll be lonesome, an' you'll be lonesome,' but to say something that'll make a body less so, or to say nothing; an' I don't know but that's the best thing. A little throuble 'ill go away iv itself—an' that's all we're in, thanks be to God! An' a big throuble might as well be let alone. If I lost you, ma Colleen dhas, or poor John aither—seldom as we meet, and a man was to come an' tell me not to be sorry, why, I'd knock him down."

"So people had betther take care o' themselves whin I'm gone."

"Well, I hope 'twill be a long time before I'm prosecuted for that assault, if 'tis God's will."

"Amen, then; if 'tis no harum to say so."

Here, having brought the girleen to what is looked on as a resting point in life, our tale naturally turns to take up the squire.

CHAPTER XX.

There are few natures, even of the granite cast, which have not what our country folk call "a soft vein" in them. Though the vein does not always happen to be of purest gold, nor is it at all times that people come its way of sagacity sufficient to get at and work it. Squire Garland, however, was favoured, not only with his soft vein, but also with a neighbour (some ten miles off) endowed with the touchstone sagacity that finds such out.

One fine smart spring forenoon, when frost and sunshine meeting had made the use of the best hunter less pleasant, as well as less safe than that of vulgar "shank's mare," the master of Cuilraike had walked into Farrenstown; and in that congenial state of body and mind which moderate exertion at such a season will produce, he was holding his way with, for the moment, no fixed end in view, along the main street, when hailed familiarly by a country magnate of several degrees above him in estate.

"Garland, my dear fellow, how are you?"

"Well, thank you: how are you?"

"Going my way—to the Bank?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Garland, without a thought beyond that of its being agreeable to walk so far in good company.

Now it happened that Squire Hawkes was, despite his acreage, at that moment in urgent need of cashing a little bill which only himself and the bank agent knew to be not quite as good

as those Bank of Ireland notes into which the old priest had changed the cheque of the other squire for the exiled and well-nigh forgotten Sally Landy. And thus, whilst with hand in his pocket, feeling the slippery surface of the ready bit of paper, he pondered the impossibility of "flying a kite with one wing," Mr. Garland—for his sins—came within view. Then, with the true spend-thrift's readiness of resource there flashed back on him a remembrance of being told within that same said bank of Garland's having given a splendid donation or two (so the tale had gained by telling) in charity. "And surely," pursued he, as they drew nearer each other, "if the fellow was good for a couple of fifties to priest or parson, he might stand something to back a neighbour of quite another grade."

Accordingly, without waiting to give this happy thought time to lose the freshness that looks so engagingly like frankness, he hailed his brother squire off-hand.

"I want to cash a bill there this morning. Castlehay is from home; and I was just wishing to meet Tom Farren" (another local magnate) "or yourself, to take his place."

Here drawing forth the bill, and holding it up within the palm of his hand before the thus favoured friend, he added, "Does that frighten you?"

And so saying, he laughed very much indeed like a man who had reason to feel the amount a matter to be frightened by.

"Not at all," responded Mr. Garland.

Drawn in—with so friendly a pressure—to take

the shoes successively of the first man in the county and of one of his deputy lieutenants, what could our squire well say but what he said? or do but what he did?—when the spring doors of the entrance, made easy as the descent to Avernus, closed noiselessly behind the pair, and the open office free of other customers at that early hour made needless the precaution of a visit to the agent's private room—take the ready pen from the common counter, as for a five pound cheque, and sign?

“At any rate,” said his acquaintance, “I shan’t beggar your wife and children.”

At which form of thanks all concerned laughed. Then, arm in arm, as they had entered, both squires quitted the bank, and again strolled through the town, Mr. Garland having the honour of being observed by a market-day’s meeting “hail-fellow-well-met” with Farren Hawkes of Hawkesfort, who, both by blood and marriage could count consins with Lord Castlehay himself. The walk closed at a confectioner’s, where they refreshed themselves, Mr. Hawkes paying; and then they parted as they had met, most friendly.

But all did not end then and there. Of this little bill, indeed, our squire never heard again. But from time to time, dating from its punctual redemption, his name began to figure in the bank books at pretty regular intervals; and, as though growing accustomed to its place in them, got at length a trick of lingering there. Meantime, a little bird of the same brood as that whose tale had furnished Mr. Hawkes with so useful a suggestion (and which nowhere else wing their way

more swiftly and unwearyingly than over innocent green fields and quiet groves) picked up and spread abroad rumours of Squire Garland's current business with the bank. And folk suddenly wakened up to the discovery that "he wasn't so bad a fellow after all. People may be talking and talking, but you can *not* tell what is in a man till you try him; and egad! Garland was proving to be better than his name."

The squire backed this belief, as he had the first bill, without premeditation—almost by surprise. Hitherto, entertainment for either man or horse at Cuilraike had been limited to a few formal dinner parties (returns in kind) within the year, and luncheon, etc., when occasionally a score or so of fellow sportsmen met the Castlehay harriers at "Garland's Cross." But now a certain class of acquaintance began to ride home with or drop in on him at other seasons. And whether it was that the sense of having larger interests at stake made him grow less careful or more reckless as to smaller matters, or that he found any company a welcome relief from thought, the idle sirs or half-sirs who found it convenient or agreeable to dine or sleep at other people's houses, saw no reason to believe that these impromptu hospitalities were grudged them by the squire. By slow and fine but sure degrees the once precise routine of his bachelor household slackened and grew very free and easy. His free and easiest visitors rode his horses, and wore his clothes, and in all respects made themselves at home with him. To the keen observance of his

inferiors, "Squire Garland was slobbering his mains at last, hard as he was."

Thus the candle was set burning at both ends. Bills for his friend Hawkes were renewed and renewed again. The squire saw himself getting deeper and deeper into the difficulties that he had no call to share. But once well into the mess, he hardly could help himself—there was no trying back it seemed. And when his friend Hawkes of Hawkesfort did utterly break down—retiring to the continent for change of air—and leave him in the lurch, the squire saw there was nothing for it but to take another "friend's advice, and stop the gap with a little girl's fortune."

Renewing his engagements, then, he proceeded to make overtures of marriage to a lady with whom he had become slightly acquainted whilst paying his addresses to another in Sally Landy's time. This lady was, of course, no longer so young as she might be; yet, luckily or unluckily for him, was just the person to accept his offer in a spirit kindred to that in which it was made. To become "Mrs. Garland of Cuilraike," Miss Starling of Castleview (a villa, with a few acres of garden grounds in the suburbs of our provincial capital) was willing to risk or sacrifice a something, although not so much as her suitor had at starting counted on. She, or her friends for her, conditioned for the settling on herself of a considerable part of her fortune. Still, Mr. Garland pushed on with the affair. Time pressed; and he knew that the very name of marrying money staves off the countless small claims that, otherwise, when a man is going down, hurry in to

down with him. In thus much he was not disappointed. It served him as a new lease of credit upon minor matters; and so left him free to meet as best he might those major ones which, like time and tide, wait on no man or woman either.

Four years of stylish struggle followed on his marriage. And he might eventually have righted his position, suffering no worse than a narrowing of means through perhaps another half-dozen years, had not the famine come upon him as upon so many equally unprepared to meet that time of trial. It made a gap in his rent-roll, before which, face to face with his creditors, he sat down in despair.

Then did the *ci-devant* Miss Starling revert in thought and word to the ease and security of the parent nest. From the outset indeed, she had not seemed wholly to merge her old in her new state; always—to the amusement of her husband's neighbours—writing herself "H. Starling Garland." And at the crisis of the squire's troubles she easily and naturally, it would appear, reclaimed her ante-matrimonial freedom, and (to use her own words) "returned home."

As she was one of those folk who, despite the proverb, do actually contrive to "have their cake and eat it," she carried back with her the main part of that which she had married for, in the style, title, and dignity of Mrs. Garland of Cuilraike. The odour of gentility, redolent of "county people," was still perceptible as before, to her city allies. No one inquired too closely into the cause or sequence of her return to her father's hospitable

house. The times were made to answer for many as strange a thing; though—to the credit be it said of our Irish nature and well taught belief in “for better for worse”—to few indeed of the same unkind kind.

“It was so suitable a settlement,” her mother said; “such a sweet place and social neighbourhood. But *he* took up those desperate acceptances for bachelor friends and got himself into such a peck of troubles! what poor Harriet never could go through. *He* is in the country, looking after matters. I don’t know how it will be with them. But she came home to us so knocked up that we could not think of letting her go back again. We cannot help blaming him greatly.”

And thus the alliance ended. Then, with the positive withdrawal of the name and reality of the lady’s marriage settlement, there passed from the squire the last resource by means of which he might have held on through a transition time.

This is a rapid sketch. But never was the road to ruin rushed over more rapidly than in our Ireland in those days: a steeple chase with a fair start, colours flying and friends to back you against the field; a giddy seat and a swerve aside; a stiff fence, a flying leap, a fall in the ditch, a dirty coat, and a pitiless crowd at the close.

So our squire sped.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Do you know who I met to-day?" said Connor Kennedy, coming in from a market day at Farrenstown, and, as he usually did, taking a seat before he spoke.

"Why, thin, indeed I don't," answered Johanna. "An' 'twould be hard for me. You meet things an' people that nobody else meets the like of."

"Mr. Garland, why?"

"An' what had he to say to you?"

"O! nothing to me advantage, as the newspapers say. He asked me to lend him twenty pounds."

"An' you did?"

"Wisha like meself I did. Though sure I suppose he wouldn't lend me nor give me—for give 'twill be I dar say—twenty kippens," pursued Connor, tipping a bit of twig that lay near his foot, softly along the hearth into the blazing fire, as he spoke, "to keep me from the union-house. When he brought himself to ask me, I couldn't bring myself to refuse him. I'd feel less to refuse another man."

"For fear he'd think you'd have it in for him?" Johanna said. "That 'ouldn't be giving good example. Let it go with the rest, why."

"I just had it in the heel o' me fist, an' a luck-penny with it, for the calves an' your *caishes*.*

* "Bonnuveen," "bonnav," "slip," "caish," "pig," are names for the same animal at different stages of its growth.

So Mr. Garland is beholden to you, too, Mrs. Kennedy," continued Connor, with a sly side-glance at his Colleen dhas. "However, to be an' honest man, I wint to the bank an' dhrew your share iv it, an' there it is!"

"An' for what raison?" Johanna asked.

"O, why I didn't know but you'd like to put it in an ould stocking, or something o' that sorte—a bank o' your own," answered Connor, knowing that Johanna had rather less confidence in banks imperial, national, or provincial, than in those receptacles that her grandmother relied on.

"Well, you needn't do that," she said.

"'But as you did,' says you, here goes!"

"Just so!" returned Johanna, taking the money from his outstretched hand. Drawing forth her house-wife, she deposited the notes in its inmost and deepest caboose.

Connor laughed, and so did she.

"Fair is fair," she said, putting back the house-wife, and feeling her gown on the outside to make sure of its lying in the bottom of her pocket.

"An' business is business," added Connor, "even when it's between man an' wife."

"An' who did I meet after, tell me if you please, as I come along the roud home?" resumed he, shortly after.

"Tell yourself, if you please, or let it alone," responded Johanna.

"Father Davis, thin, an' nobody else. 'Well, Connor,' says he, 'so the land is changing han's over you?'"

"Between this an' Lady Day, Sir, say I.

"'An' how do you like that?' says he.

"Seldom comes a bether, says I. I suppose your reverence often hear that saying?

"'Why,' says he, 'have you anything to say for the ould man?'

"I have nothing to say again him, says I; if he done me no good, why he done me no harum, an' he could, and often if he liked.

"'Aye, to his own cost, Connor, I dare say,' says he.

"Well, even so, your reverence, says I, where there's real malice in the heart people will forget that same some time or other!

"'H'm!' says Father Davis; 'thru, an' I'm glad to find you so charitable, Connor.'

"An' if I was more so than I am, sure 'twould be on'y follying your reverence's teaching, says I.

"Why thin, you see, Father Richard blushed up a little, an' I wint on, without purtending anything, to say me own say.

"Squire Garland's mother was a right good woman, says I. I often an' often hear tell of her from me own father; the Lord ha' mercy on 'em both, if it's no harm to say so! An', you see, for the ould man's sake, (though I b'lieve he never wanted from her), and for her's I'd wish the son betther luck, says I.

"'An' grace,' says Father Davis, with that smile he has.

"For me own part, your reverence, says I, I like the ould stock o' the country. Unless they're bad intirely, out an' out, there's more good to be got iv 'em than is always to be seen from your money-come-hethers-upstarts, as a body may

say. Maning no offence to the new landlord: I know very little about him.

" 'The more you know the better you'll like him, I trust an' hope, Connor,' says he.

" That may be Sir, says I. But all I know yet is that I got notice to pay the March gale be the twinty-first iv Apuril. That's doing business sharp!

" 'Well, well,' says he, 'that was sharp enough, certainly!'

" Your men o' business, Sir, says I, bring their ould ways to the land, too. 'Tis to be expected. They don't undherstand letting their money lie idle—as it seems to them—from gale to gale, or half gale aither. They think 'twon't overtake 'em to get it soon enough; instead o' seeing that when they lay the heavy hand upon the sthruggling man, they're killing the goose that laid the goolden eggs for 'em. Not that it makes any difference to me, says I, not that much! But he has poor tenants with small mains an' large families; an' 'twould be a good man's part, your reverence, to get him to dhrive his cows aisy with them.

" 'We'll see, we'll see,' says he. 'We musn't be too hard upon him, Connor, all in a hurry. If he gives law, he must get law; he's not too ould to learn.'

" Faix, thin I'm afraid 'tis law he'd give, says I, though not the sorte o' law you main, Father Davis?

" 'Well, Connor, the twenty-first of April did not come yet; an' let us wait till then.'

"Fair play is a jewel, Sir, says I; he'll never do more good than I'd like to give him credit for.

"'That's what I'd expect from you,' says he, 'from all I hear iv you, an' the little I know iv you meself.'

"So we parted upon that, you see; his reverence giving me a shake o' the hand."

"Well, that same was friendly," said Johanna.

"Father Davis is a good priest, I have no doubt," continued Connor; "but we're all men, priest an' people. An' 'tis only natural he'd be dhrawn to them that make high fellow-well-met with himself. Goodness knows 'twould be hard, an' very hard, to blame him, or the likes iv him. He takes pleasure in a bit o' chat an' a good dinner with his aikuils; 'tisn't the likes o' me an' you would do him ever an' always: 'tis all fair. But I beg laive to have my own feel about all these little matthers, too. An' gim' me ould stock: Papist or Protestant, if they're not the dickens all out."

"You're the quare man," said Johanna, "an' ever an' always wor."

"Eh, what! aren't you for the ould stock, too?"

"Well—"

"O! well an' well. How many wells go to a river?"

"Wan well is that I want to send Cauth there now," replied Johanna, going her way in search of Cauth.

CHAPTER XXII.

From the date of Mrs. Starling-Garland's quitting Cuilraike, the Squire had heard little news of, and none from her. But, seeing that he neither could get money from the lady, nor any longer make her the representative of money, the separation, to say truth, rather eased than irked him. The superintendence of a certain old acquaintance, Nance Kettlewell by name, who knew how to use money when she got it, and to make many a petty but important contrivance, when little or none was to be had, was far more congenial to his quickly falling fortunes.

Still, while free from constraint with her, he derived but a qualified comfort from her presence or attention. Nance was said to be descended, through a generation or two of poor people, from a family whose glory, like that of Mr. Garland's own, had been and was gone. She had run through a tolerably chequered career, one that rendered her an able make-shift, and a willing, when in humour; but which certainly had rubbed away the rude fine feeling that will sometimes make a peasant's sympathy more cordial than a king's. At times, too, she seemed disposed to resent, as an intended injury, the Squire's having spent his moneyed days without her help; the more so that she had, when very young, been in his mother's service and dismissed. So that on

the whole she showed but a fitful devotedness to her new old master.

As all his usual resources failed, the Squire, somewhat at Nance's instance, did summon up courage, on a time or two, to endeavour to interest in his future fate some of his former associates. He rode across the country to right and left, saw this brother magistrate or that, or did not see them, as it came to pass; but either way he might, he found, as well have stayed at home. Such sinecures as he could expect to fill were not many in his day, and had their very many candidates who, it seemed easily proven, had stronger claims than he. Even the courteous patrons who would take the trouble to demonstrate that fact were not to be met with in every mansion. Farren Hawkes was yet abroad, fleeing his own creditors; Lord Castlehay in the house, looking after his own interests or objects. In short, nobody, who was anybody, was at home to any purpose to the moneyless and hopeless Squire.

Riding slowly back after one of those last efforts, he slackened pace yet more in passing the long, substantial wall enclosing the well-stacked haggart of his rejected, neglected child. There glanced across his mind, though but as day-dream wise, the possibility of his finding a refuge there, safe from want and free of the bailiff, at the least. But with that thought came another, of how this would tell amongst his own tenants, his once dependants, servants even. "How the nobles came to ninepence with Squire Garland; an' how he was glad to get his bit an' his sait in the corner." And, setting spurs to his horse, he fled.

as though he could leave thought, and pride, and poverty behind.

Two labourers working in a field near the roadside, raised their heads as he went by, and stood still a moment looking after him.

"I hear that Garland was goin' to the divil fast enough; but 'twould seem as if he didn't think so himself," said one.

"Gor! it would so," returned the other.

But, Mr. Garland was for the moment heedless of what might now be thought of such a flight in his person, or the strange excitement he enjoyed felt worth what it might bring him to. The motion exhilarated, almost maddened him. On and on he pressed. A something that seemed not quite within him, panted to give out the "Hoicks!" and "Halloo!" so long accustomed to his lips at a less rapid pace. With difficulty, through an instinctive dread of being thought to be insane, he controlled it. At length, dashing through the gateway of his own courtyard, his race ended. He pulled up, and cast the rein upon the horse's neck. There was nobody to take the animal from his hand. The recollection of that brought him to himself somewhat. Yet instead of following out the horseman's impulse, himself to tend the heated beast, he drew towards the house steps, roughly threw the bridle round a twisted horn that topped them, and strode indoors past Nance, muttering, "Let them that will own him come and groom him, and be d——d to them."

Then a cowed feeling came coldly over him. Going to the dining-room, he swallowed some brandy; coming out, he gave Nance notice of

the greater caution requisite in keeping close the house-doors, and, without listening to her explanation of "how she run in a fright whin she heerd the horse, thinking no wan could be on him, an' he goin' at such a rate," went back, and was seen no more till his simple and solitary meal awaited him. When Nance went in search of him, she found him seated on a broad window-sill that stood in a lobby just without an apartment that in his young days used to be the nursery. He sat there sidewise, looking neither in nor out directly; and, as she said to herself, "He wasn't dhrunk, an' he wasn't sober. She didn't know what to make iv him. But the quare thing intirely was, that whin he had his dinner, all the more he dhrank the studier he got."

This day marked the moral crisis in the Squire's fortunes. From this date he drank of his own brew, bitter as it was, in unmixed sobriety; as one who can look his fate in the face and sustain it like a man. The fact that he did so, won him sympathy from some, from some respect. On others, it possibly imposed the belief that he must be borne up by some secret hope or certainty. When, perhaps, the real and entire truth was, that as far as was possible, he shut his eyes against what must be coming. And to know how far it is possible so to do in such a case, (and probable of some of us, powerful free agents that we are!) needs more of a peculiar temperament in one's self, or of the observation of it in others, than falls to the lot of all folk in and round Farrenstown, or any other small scene of a little life-drama.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Prior to all other charges on Mr. Garland's property, stood a settlement reserving a life use of the mansion-house and garden to a dowager Mrs. Garland, widow of his father's elder brother, still existing in one of those small towns on the Continent, where life is cheap and cheery, and likely to be long. This old lady's claim was all that now lay between him and the sky for roof. But for that he would already have been houseless. As it was, he held on in constant dread of learning that an arrangement which would necessitate his giving up possession, had been come to between this old Mrs. Letitia and the new lord of the soil. He knew something of the sort soon must come to pass, and meantime he lived a sad, shabby, and precarious life indeed. The garden supplied him with potatoes, and for "the with'em" he was dependent mainly on presents from former tenants: fowls and eggs, a stray quarter of mutton, or a string of sausages, when a sheep or pig was killed. These, and the smaller etcetera of daily need, would Nance, in her rather rare respectful moods, announce as "sent up to his honour." At other times his honour was fain to listen to details, more or less emphasised, of Nance's own skill in manœuvring them "out o' that bad graft," Jude, or Nell, or Kitty so-and-so. Then, for the Squire had been wont to pass a wet day over a novel, he

would compare himself and Nance to the Master of Ravenswood and his Caleb; but only to feel in how many respects his own position was the inferior one.

Had he owed a good round reputable sum, looking awful to the eyes of petty creditors, he might yet awhile have been left unmolested in what he called his home. But no: his debts, though many, were not magnificent enough for that; and paper pellets continued to pour in on him for what Nance described as "dhribs an' dhrabs owing over an' hether," till at long last, one foggy miserable morning, Murrougha* appeared in the body at the breakfast-table, stealing in on tiptoe behind Nance Kettlewell.

"So you have done it at last!" cried the Squire, pointing over Nance's shoulder, as she set the teapot on the table.

Nance looked and screamed.

"You may hold your tongue now, and begone with you."

Conscious, as a sudden recollection assured her, of having done it, Nance quitted the room sulky-sorry, and, muttering something of "its being out iv all raison that she could mind doors an' windas, an' himself for ever opening 'em, looking for air, as if there wasn't air enough in a good room for any man!"

"Well, Mahaffy?" said the Squire.

"Well, your worship, I hope it will be all well

* Our southern Irish genius of ill-fortune. "He saw Murrougha," meaning that the unhappy *he* has gone through all sorts of trials, "troubles within and without."

soon," responded the bailiff, with that silky-slyness that gives one the notion of feeling the claw of a cat through the softness of its fur. Turning aside, Mahaffy took possession of a chair which, after thoughtfully examining it for a moment or two, he planted near the door, and, placing himself thereon, he directly faced Mr. Garland.

"At whose suit?" demanded the Squire.

"Only the bank's," answered Mahaffy; "for the last little bit o' paper your honour done there. 'Twas often renewed; an' your worship knows where the other name is."

"You may let me eat my breakfast in peace, I suppose?" said the Squire, grimly.

"Well, I don't say exactly but I might. My warrant isn't again your worship's body this time; but the furniture. Take your time; I don't wish to make meself onpleasant."

"I cannot carry off the furniture through the window or up the chimney."

The bailiff looked considerably at the window and fireplace; but made no move to go. Seeing which, the Squire flung him across the table a shilling, saying, "Stay down stairs."

"Another man 'ould make that a half-crown now," muttered Mahaffy, to himself. "However, he doesn't seem very flush o' cash this morning."

The Squire's broken-down air, his clothes, a trousers glossy with newness, and a coat glazed with brushing, showing his gradual decline of credit, and the point where it had stopped; nothing was lost on the eye of the observant bailiff. And, accordingly, it was with a half-careless air that, pocketing the shilling, he lounged

out of the room, and walked down to the ground floor.

The Squire's meal was soon over; and the bell was heard for Nance "to take away the nothing that was left," Mahaffy said to his coadjutor. Yet he went to the stair-foot to make sure that nothing but the tray was coming down. Nance was half crying as he stayed her on the last step to glance over what she carried.

"Now, this is all your fault, my dear," he said; "this 'ouldn't happen if you wint to the bank this morning."

Nance laughed.

"Will you hold your tongue there, you jade!" cried the Squire, from the lobby overhead.

"O, yea!" returned Nance. "We laughed before ever we see your yallow face."

"An' will again, me dear," added Mahaffy, as he politely offered to take the tray from her hands, to carry it for her to the kitchen. "These little affairs put a man a little out iv his way till he's used to 'em."

"Used enough thin he'll be to 'em!" cried Nance, up towards the lobby, whence the Squire was retreating. "An' there let him! I don't care. 'Twasn't so aisy to housekeep for him sence I come to him; an' afther all to hear what he says to me!"

"Well, well," Mahaffy said; "don't you vex yourself, me purty little girl!"

This was rather more than Nance liked by way of sympathy. She knew herself to be a tall, large-boned, and, as she would express it, "thin-spared" woman of five-and-thirty. Moreover, to

do poor Nance justice, her anger was like tinder, a spark, a blaze, and 'twas gone; and it was in anger only that she could for a moment make common cause with a bailiff. Rather disdainfully, then, she allowed of his assistance in putting by the tea-things.

"Come, now," he said, "let us do what is to be done. Are the doors open, misthiss?"

"The doors are open," answered Nance. "But there isn't much inside iv 'em for you. May be 'tis as good for you to wait till himself comes to shew 'em to you."

"To shew 'em to me, ma'am!" said Mahaffy. "May be I haven't two eyes in me own head? I thought I had."

"Well, use 'em!" said Nance. "An' begin at the top."

"Not a bad plan," said Mahaffy; "'tis aisier to come down in the world than to go up, as far as I see. Do you stay there, Tim. An' you needn't go to sleep. Do you hear?"

Waiting till Mahaffy had returned from upstairs, Nance ascended to the study, whither the Squire had retired. He sat there in his magisterial chair, his hands in his pockets, his eyes fixed on vacancy.

"'Tis as good for you to come now an' show thim fellows what there's for 'em, an' have done with 'em," she said.

"Aye; so it is, Nance."

He took from a secret drawer in the desk, of old his great-grandfather's, a time-stained inventory, and followed her down stairs.

"We have our list made out now, Squire,"

Mahaffy said, looking at that the Squire held, with the signature of Mrs. Letitia, attached fifty years before, showing faint but clear in it, and all due documents accompanying.

"A good thing can't be done too often, Dan," said Nance; "so you'll have to make it over again."

Miss Kettlewell gave him the pleasure of her company while performing this unlooked-for task. There was nothing to be gained here by getting angry; so Mahaffy went through it quietly and pretty civilly. Very little indeed there was for the law to lay its hands on. The Squire, during his single life, had refurnished but a few state rooms. And, on gaining an insight of his circumstances, Miss Starling had exchanged an anxiety to refit the rest for a sentiment in favour of "seeing things exactly as they were in the good old times of Mr. G.'s ancestors." Such articles as she held indispensable for comfort or convenience, she had bought for herself and removed with herself. And some of the Squire's heaviest purchases had, under favour of his last loads of corn, travelled back to the cabinet-maker for a *con-si-de-ra-tion*. In short, so little remained that was available to a creditor, that, after a few messages, passed between Mahaffy and his principal, that little was, by common consent, removed; and the old house and old master left to solitude and Nance Kettlewell's consolation. But not to quiet. For Nance forthwith proceeded to refit the sitting-rooms with the old-time chairs and tables, secretaries and nobbies, which long had lain neglected in an attic lumber-room. Beside the pleasure of action, and

of ordering a few honorary assistants called in for the occasion, Nance felt that to fill somehow the empty spaces was a sort of amends for the fault that had helped the bailiff to "the han'some new things."

"An' the ould things worn't so bad afther all," she said to her subordinates. "Right well they look now. Thim that bought *thin* long ago spared nothin' on 'em; an' they show it now."

Mr. Garland willingly permitted all this bustle of removal, as any noise was, he thought, preferable to the sound of Nance's tongue directed at himself. And the empty spaces, too, had been so suggestive of the dismal vacuity of his other prospects. But, when all was dusted, cleansed, polished, and set in its old haunts by aid of Nance's sharp recollection of the place as ordered in her early days, he saw it precisely as it had been in his mother's time, in his boyhood; he glanced over it with an eye other than Nance had looked to meet "after all her slaving," and for the moment he would have fled from it.

"Is it goin' out in the rain you are?" Nance asked. "Well, if you must have the rights iv it, there's more than wan wanting you outside that you'd as soon not see."

"Can't they leave me in peace, now?" he said. "They have no more to get from me."

"They won't, thin," declared Nance. "Whilever you're in your own house they'll be hagging afther you."

"I believe so," said the poor Squire, ruefully; "but," he added to himself, "where am I to go to from it?"

"Well," Nance said, "never mind that for this day. 'Tis time for me to be thinkin' o' your dinner; an' for you, too. Who knows what to-morrow 'ill do for us?"

"Well, hurry with it, Nance, like a good girl."

"You'll have it while you'd be lookin' about ye. I didn't forget to put it down an' let it be doin' while the other work was goin' on. Here, be reading a book till I bring it to you," she concluded, drawing forth from a capacious pocket several volumes. "I hid them."

Thanking her, and glad to lose his own in any other's thoughts, the Squire chose one, and read till she reappeared with dinner.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Well," Billix said, as he stood by Connor Kennedy's kitchen fire, "dustin' the dhrops from his spattherdashes;" "well," he said, "'tis a quare thing, an' a melancholy thing for a man to have a sait on the binch an', be the law! not to have a binch iv his own to sit on."

"It is so," agreed Johanna.

"It is so!" repeated Billix. "That's the way to say it, Mrs. Kennedy. There 'ouldn't be a stick o' furniture in Cuilraike House this could mornin', but that Dan Mahaffy—he tould me so himself—prevailed with the other bailiff to laive Mr. Garland the use o' the best part iv the ould furniture while he's there."

Connor made no comment upon this; and, Johanna observing him, was silent too.

"O! sure I see John Cremen an' his wife o' Sunday week in Mr. Garland's gig that he used to dhrove so dashing," Cauth said.

"An' you did?" said Johanna.

"I did a-maseadh!* an'," added Cauth, "very well it became 'em."

"'As castles fall, dunghills rise,' good girl," said Billix. "Many's the sportin' day thim (pointing to his gaiters) went through bog an' brake with Farren Hawkes, Esquire, an' they're on Billix now."

"They're on an honest man, I b'lieve," Johanna said.

"Thank you, Mrs. Kennedy," returned Billix, drawing out a sugaun chair, and sitting down.

"I'm on'y giving you your merit, Billix."

"An' that's what you'd do to every wan: I always obsarved that in you."

"Thank you, now, Billix," rejoined Johanna, smiling.

"Why, thin, I tell you this poor man over had good starts in him, eh?"

"I declare to you," Johanna said, "we didn't know much of him except in the way o' business."

"Why, thin, I tell you he had," pursued Billix. "I used be comin' home iv a day—an' a bad day it was, be the same token—"

"For rabbits?" said Connor.

"Iss, an', no—sure what a fool I am! I was

* Indeed, (pronounced a-mossa).

goin' to say a bad day for ducks. I was up to me ancles a'most in the gutther; the roads was very heavy intirely. But I wasn't in the road then, but in the plantation, comin' out, whin who should I see but Mr. Garland, his honour an' his worship that was thin, why. ('Tisn't but I'd show him as much respect to-day; so I would!). An' I wondhered to meself to hear him talkin', an' he stoopin' down iv his horse. 'An' what brings you here,' says he, 'me little man?' to an unfortunate little creature iv a child. An' the child begin to cry. Be a dail to do why he made out from him whose son he was. An' thin he looks down at him again, an' at the pommel of his saddle, an' along the road; an' egor! down he lights, an' takes him up between his finger an' thumb, an' a dirty lump he had in him, an' walks along in the gutther himself till he come near Paddy Hourigan's door, an' there he lets him down. 'We won't have an inquest on you this time, at any rate,' he says, talkin' to himself, 'ithout waitin' for Paddy or any wan to see him. An' up he mounts again, afther I wipin' his saddle—for I run up whin I see he wasn't goin' to call any o' the family to do it for him, an' away he goes."

"I declare to you now," said Johanna, pausing in her words and work, "I didn't think there was so much good as that in him; God forgim' me for judgin' the man!"

"Why, thin, there was, you see," said Billix.

"Yerra!" Connor said, taking a place on the settle, "the nature that's in us is a quare thing. You never can tell where to put your hand on it;

it doubles like a hare. You think you're sure iv it in wan spot, an' whoops! Billix, up it turns behind your back where you'd never look for it. 'Tis a quare thing; an' we're quare creatures, the Lord knows: an' I b'lieve no one else knows us."

"Sure that's what I always say!" cried Billix. "You're sure to find some good in wan o' the right sorte. Let 'em be as black as the devil, they haven't the out-an'-out mainness iv—"

"Hearken to him, now," said Connor, to Johanna. "He thinks that gintlemen, why, if they have rabbits on their land an' let a poor man snare 'em—an' I don't say but 'tis a good thing of 'em—but, Billix, you'd give 'em the ten commandments an' the prcepts o' the Church in; so they didn't braik ground on you. Sure, don't I remember the day o' Green's election (that I have a good right to remember), you were a little elevated, you know—"

"Why, thin, I'll tell you what happened me, Mr. Kennedy. I was not; but I didn't ate a bit that day, nor much the day before—"

"That may be," said Connor; "but then, Billix, you wet it well."

"Why, thin, indeed an' indeed—"

"O, well, why," interrupted Connor; "see, Billix, let us talk o' rabbits; 'tis as good a subject as another."

"The best going," Billix said, jauntily.

"The next good pair you take bring 'em to this good woman here, an' see if she hasn't the price of 'em."

"An' a good 'oman she is!" Billix said.

"'Tisn't here you'd say to the contrary," said Johanna.

"Dy you think I'd say it anywhere? Why, thin you do not: an' a bad right I'd have."

"An' who else 'ould dar' say it to her? let me see," said Connor.

"That's the way to say it!" cried Billix.

"Especially if you ate nothing all day, Billix."

"Well," Billix said, "I'll be going, an' you'll see what a pair I'll bring ye."

When Billix was gone, Connor came close to the fire and sat down. He mused awhile. Then his eye twinkled, and his features puckered, and at last he burst into a laugh. "Well," he said, "what a vagabone liar that fellow is!"

"Is it Billix?"

"Mahaffy. As if a bailiff 'ould laive anything he could lay han's on!"

"Wisha *foraor craithe*,* an' 'tis he that wouldn't, Sir!" Cauth (a once well-to-do farmer's daughter) said, with a heavy sigh.

"How do you know?" Johanna said, addressing Connor.

"How do I know?" and Connor paused.

Cauth took up a water-pail and passed through the doorway; but stood still at the corner of the house; with apron to her eyes, to give way to the recollections whence came her knowledge of the class Mahaffy.

"May be I don't know what a bailiff is?" continued Connor, "though, thanks be to God! I never see 'em on me own floore."

* An expression of sorrow.

" 'Old Harry isn't as black as he's painted,' as you say yourself," returned the Colleen dhas.

" Though I do say it meself, I hope we'll never see the colour iv him, to make sure ; 'tis a piece o' curiosity I'd excuse."

" An' aren't you just afther saying that a body doesn't know where he'll meet a good turn whin he laist expects it ?"

" Oh! I am, why. But 'there's raison in roasting eggs.' Mr. Garland 'ouldn't be his father an' mother's son if he hadn't some good in him. An' you know, may be, he had a feel about him that made him do that especially."

" Why, thin indeed, Dan Mahaffy had an honest dacent father an' mother, too."

" More's the pity that their son should demain himself to that! He is what he is now, an' the less said iv it the better. But, woman alive, don't you know that if he was ever so well inclined he couldn't do such a thing 'ithout laive or license ?"

" May be he got laive an' license from them that could give it."

" But, sure it stands to raison that some o' the furniture goes with the house. What man in his senses 'ould think o' laiving his poor widow the four wall iv an empty house an' nothing in it ?"

" Even so," Johanna said, " little good for him whatever is there. He can't live out of chairs an' tables."

" He can't so," returned Connor. And then again he fell a musing, and was silent till summoned to the parlour and his comfortable dinner.

CHAPTER XXV.

All these changes could not, it must be supposed, occur at the great house without producing some commotion in the little ones with which it was connected. And, in fact, as events passed on, and bad grew to worse, an observer would detect some new leaven stirring the depths of nature or of grace, which lay beneath the surface of the quiet farming life of Conner Kennedy and his so-called son-in-law. The men bought and sold as usual. The women churned and baked. But one might see that there was yet an after-thought disturbing them, when everything apparently was said and done; that, as any one of themselves might have expressed it, "they worn't altogether aisy in themselves." The Girleen, as she stroked her little girl's hair, or replied to some one of the many questions of her boys, looked as though her mind was not all at home with them. And, at times, as she took one of her sweet, well-baked substantial home-made loaves from out her bastable-oven, she glanced over it approvingly, and from it to the door-way, as though she wished it, with full and plenty, somewhere else; and when she laid it on the dresser to cool, it was not without a sigh.

One morning Johanna walked over to Scrowthea to let Mary know that she purposed going next day into Farrenstown; and to enquire "if she had any commands?"

"I don't think I have, mother," Mary said. "I b'lieve I bought all I wanted the last day we were there."

"I thought so, indeed; but I didn't like to go 'ithout making sure. An' how is the little man himself? Oh, my! oh, my! He's growing greatly, I declare to you."

"Wisha not much," said Mary, modestly. "For all he's a good child for his age, they all say."

Both women now walked over the house and place, *i.e.*, the out-houses, dairy, etc., as was their custom; noting changes that were next to none: discussing the milk given by the several cows; the growth and fattening of calves and pigs; the hens that were good enough to have not yet ceased laying; and especially the goodness of the famous Gochin-Chinas, in which both women took a peculiar interest for each other's sake.

"Why, thin, Mary," Johanna said, when they had returned indoors and sat down, and a pause had come upon the pleasant household chat, "if that poor man over was here 'ith you, he wouldn't be much in the way afther all?"

"Much!" repeated Mary, "he wouldn't be in the way at all. There's room enough, or 'twould be aisy to make it. But, you know, John is a little close, an' may be *he'd* be expecting too much."

"He won't *now*."

"An' what could I do between 'em? I couldn't, with any face,* make the stand for him that I could for me father."

* *i. e.* With an appearance of reason:

Her mother smoothed her hair down fondly, as she had been used to do in the old times. "I suppose you think your mamma is too big to be a pet?" she said to little Hannah, who had drawn near them.

"Go down to Molly for the saucepan till we warm a drop o' porter for gan'mamma, Hannah."

"Do you do the best you can, my heart," Johanna said, "and John 'ill be improving. His heart will open with the children, as they grow up to him. I don't see what you have to say again him now; I'm sure if that isn't a cloak an' a half he got for you."

"Why, then, he wanted me to get a han'some shawl or a cape;* something that 'ould be more showy, whatever I'd give for it. But I'd rather that meself."

"An' so 'ould I. I'll never like thim githeens o' things. If you're not dressed up to 'em, as nice as a new pin from head to foot, you look like a wan-horned cow."

"I didn't want that—to say *want*—aither for another year. That's the girleen! (to Hannah.) But he takes a pride out o' seeing me well dressed. Here, now, take that down to Molly, an' mind it, let me see, mamma's little housekeeper. Study, now, an' don't spill it. An' let Molly bring it up herself, for fear 'twould scald you, me pet."

"Oh! she's a good girl," said Johanna.

"Wan thing I know," resumed Mary, "'an 'tis it I'd be most afraid of; John wouldn't like to be having mait every day. An' what else could we put before *him*? 'Tisn't that he'd miss it so

* "Githeen," (the g pronounced hard), a scanty, flimsy garment.

much at the year's end, I'm sure; but he 'ouldn't think that himself why."

"We'll put him in good humour—if it is a thing it takes place—for the first while, at any rate, as far as mait goes. Your father is wanting me to kill a cow. That'll give us all a good bit o' mait for some time. An' you'll see that when John 'ill get used to it, 'tis only the good excuse he'll want to give it to himself, too."

"I know 'tis me juty," said Mary; "but 'twouldn't come well from me to propose it to him. I didn't come empty to him, to be sure; an' he doesn't forget that; but at the same time he sees that 'tisn't to *him* that's owing; an' he'd get a fortune with many a girl that 'ouldn't be in my case."

"An' I wouldn't ask you, my heart; nor I wouldn't advise you to propose it. But somebody 'ill be found to do it. If anything is to be done, we must do it how we can; an' that's all about it. I declare this 'ill make me half tipsy, I so seldom take it. Won't that be a purty thing for an old gran'mamma, Hannah? I must be running away now. Himself 'ill wondher where I am if he misses me out. Good-bye, asthore! Good-bye, Hannah, me darling! An' good-bye to the little man; though he can't say good-bye himself."

"You ought to take a walk over oftener than you do; you stay too much at home," said Mary.

"Oh, why, 'there's no place like home,'" Johanna replied, smiling.

Mary smiled in return; but when Johanna was gone, she sighed, and deeply.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It happened about this time that Connor and his Colleen dhas were seated together in the pleasant open air of a fine October evening, just beyond the threshold of the farm-house door. Johanna had brought thither a sugaun-chair,* in order to oversee at ease some operation going on amongst the servant girls at the brook that took its course across the fields in front. There Connor had joined her. Refusing to take the seat in her stead, and seeing her not content to let him stand, he was fain to take the trouble of bringing out a second for himself.

"I saw the day when you could spare me a share iv it," he said, as he planted his chair sturdily by hers: "but that day isn't now, *a-vanithe*."

"An' may be a part iv it wouldn't be oversizable for yourself," rejoined Johanna.

"Have it so, why, for paice sake," said Connor. "You'll have the last word whether 'tis the case or no: that's the nature o' the baist."

"Who's that?" he asked, after both had sat awhile silent, pleasantly surveying the very pleasant scene before them: "Father Davis?"

"I believe so," said Johanna, to whom a third party might guess the appearance of the priest riding up the borheen was not quite unexpected.

* Made of ropes formed of twisted straw, called sugauns.

"Good evening to you, Connor; good evening, ma'am," Father Davis said, coming up and then dismounting. "I won't go in, thank you, 'tis pleasanter here. I'll rest myself standing."

And so, declining either chair, and constraining Johanna to retake her's, he drew up his horse behind him, and, leaning back lightly against the saddle, stood and talked away.

"Fine evening, sir," said Connor.

"Indeed it is! A real pleasure to enjoy the air just now."

"Especially after a hard morning's work, sir," Johanna said. "The stations are very heavy with ye this week, and far away."

"'Tis so we'd have them, you know," returned the priest, "'tis easier for us to meet our parishioners than to be looking for them when they stay away; so we can't complain, ma'am. So the game is almost up at the big house over—I hear," he said to Connor after a moment's pause, and pointing his whip-handle in the direction of Cuil-raike.

"I fear so, sir," Connor said gravely.

"And what is he to do?"

"I'm sure I dun know," answered Connor with a look and tone that somehow fell short of conveying a belief in his own words.

"I am told he has absolutely nothing left, *absolutely* nothing," resumed Father Davis: "just waiting the summons to turn out of the house."

"So we hear, too, sir," Connor said, glancing at Johanna.

"Well," continued the priest slowly, and as though weighing his words: "if he had anything,

as much or as little as would support life, I wouldn't meddle in his affairs or in those of others for him."

"No doubt you wouldn't, sir," put in Johanna.

"But the workhouse, you know! 'Tisn't exactly the place where you'd like to send a gentleman."

"'Tis a place this man 'ouldn't like to send a dog to," again Johanna interposed.

"Whenever you belied me," said Connor, "it wasn't whin you said that."

"But to have the child living in plenty, and the father in want, isn't the thing, Connor."

"'Tis not, sir, sure enough;" replied Connor. "May be you'd braik the thing to John, your reverence? I couldn't well, somehow."

"I was wishing you would this time back meself, sir," said Johanna.

"An' faix, I b'lieve you wor," said Connor, looking sharply at her.

The Colleen dhas coloured, but she smiled too.

"Certainly I will," said Father Davis.

"Do thin; an' the Lord be good to your own father's soul, your reverence," said Connor.

"I'll just say a word to him to-morrow, then," said the priest, "and let him think it over. I can understand well how hard his wife would find it to do anything in the matter. But, of course, she could not have an easy conscience if things were to go on in this way to the end with the unfortunate man."

"She couldn't, and she wouldn't," Connor said.

"What shelters that mare he rides—and she's a pretty thing. I think it was ere yesterday I

saw him on her. I wonder she's not taken from him, for I'm told he's dipped more or less in everybody's books in Farrenstown."

"A shelther I wouldn't like to see put over a baist o' mine," answered Connor, "a friendly decree o' wan o' the tenants—"

"Your's?" said Father Davis in a low tone. He knew that there are secrets in most households; and, having been but a short time in the parish, he did not yet thoroughly know Connor's.

"'Twouldn't be manners to contradiet your reverence," returned Connor in a like key.

"If he married in time," Johanna said, thoughtfully, "he wouldn't be as he is now—a respectable prudent woman that 'ould keep his substance together, he'd have his own good roof over his head to the last."

"You think the women can do everything," said Connor.

"Faix, I know they can do a great dail, an' undo it too, whin they have a turn that way."

"The Lord keep you from taking that turn thin!" said Connor, "for if you tuk id, you'd take it very sthrong: no wan could hould you, I'm afraid."

Father Davis laughed.

"'Tis no joke to Squire Garland though," continued Connor. "Wan way or other I'd be glad matters were in some other way with him."

"Well," Father Davis said, "I'll do my part without delay: and so far 'tis settled. Good evening!"

"This man 'ill walk down to the road with you, sir," Johanna said.

“What’s become of his wife?” the priest asked, as, after having walked silently—Connor leading the horse down the narrow *borheen*—they reached the high road.

“Oh, the unnatural jade! As ould Mrs. Davis, your namesake, sir, but a black Protestant, said to her daughter when she ran away, she wouldn’t give him as much as would make a jockey-jacket for a gooseberry.”

“God help us!” said the priest, when he had laughed and laughed again. “That was Mrs. Davis of Castle Davis, Connor.”

“The very same, sir; Black Davis’s daughter. They were both Davises, man an’ wife; lick alike, an’ it ran in the blood with ’em to have a warm heart.”

“Well, good evening, Connor!”

“Good evening, sir, an’ safe home!”

“What’ll *he* do?” meaning John Meany, queried Johanna of Connor, when he again stood by her.

“He’ll do the right thing,” answered Connor, “though may be he ’ont do it with the very best grace.”

“Well, ‘beggars can’t be choosers,’” Johanna said to herself, as after a moment’s thought she took up her chair and went in doors.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The girleen was at work by her snug fire in her comfortable house, her own little girl, for whom she was sewing, seated at her feet, when, unexpectedly, John re-entered the house.

"Did you see *him* going by just now?" he asked.

"No," answered Mary, starting.

"I did. I b'lieve there's a month or six weeks ago sence he rode by iv another day, an' he rode in be the garden hedge, an' he looked so close at the haggart,* that if it was another man, I'd say he'd be wanting to bid for it. Just then the dogs run out at the horse, an' he set spurs to him an' galloped away as if twinty dickenses wor after him."

Finding that Mary did not speak, John went on:

"Meself had half a mind to spaik to him to-day; but," he added, with a short laugh, "my heart come into my mouth, an' I didn't. Though I dun know why I shouldn't spaik to him, now or thin—or you aither—if the fancy tuk uz?"

"'Twas as well so; I'm not sorry you didn't," said Mary, covertly wiping tears that came at the thought of "her dogs turning her father from her door, such as he was."

"I was glad I was standing where I was, as I

* Commonly a small field in which corn and hay are stacked. But the same word is also applied to "the bit of garden" rented by the poor man, who owns neither corn nor hay.

didn't spaik," continued John. "He couldn't see me."

Mary kept on thinking.

"Mary!"

"Well?"

"Sure, 'tisin't to the union you'd let him go, afther all? An', be all I hear, he has nothing else to look to just now."

"There are better people there before him—God forgive him!"

"That's a thrue bill, an' no mistake. Still, an' all, that 'ouldn't do for uz. What 'ould the neighbours say—if it was nothing else?"

"What the neighbours 'ould say wouldn't give me much trouble. Besides, how do we know he'd come here?"

John looked at her.

"If he gets a betther offer, he's welcome to it, with all my heart," he said. "It could be no great pleasure to me to bring a broken-down gentleman in upon me floore, to be more masther there than myself, may be."

"Indeed, he has little claim on it or you."

"Little as it is, you'd as soon it didn't come to his turn to want it, I b'lieve. But I don't wondher at that; you have the dacent dhrop in you; an' they say that'll braik out."

Mary made no reply. But, a short time after, when John had returned to his business, she took her cloak from its peg in the room, and prepared to cross the fields to her father's. "Her father's!" she repeated, sadly; "'tis me cross that he isn't me father in airnest." During the past part of her married life she had been accustomed "to give a

run over" to Connor's nearly every day; and had not held it needful to offer either reason or excuse for the doing so. But now, conscious of a feeling that she never before had taken with her, she took from a line that crossed the kitchen, some thread that she had spun for Johanna, and held it before her as she walked towards the spot where John was.

"Where to, *a-Vauria*?"* he asked, good humouredly enough.

"Over to Currahaly," she answered, looking down on the thread.

"Why, I thought you were there yesterday?"

"Well, an' what if? 'Tisn't so far but I might go again to-day," she said, a little tartly, as, twisting up the hank of thread, she quickly and decisively stepped past him.

Reaching Currahaly, she entered the house, half-absently, forgetting to give the good-morrow, or the God save all here! or even "the time o' day," as Connor said, "but just as if she was walking in from the bawn or the garden, to the ould home again. 'Tis like bringing you back to your mother; an' there I'll laive you, Mrs. Meany. For a man must see after his bit o' business even when he has no little girl looking to him for promotion."

So saying, he went out of doors. Mary sat still awhile. Then, rising suddenly, she took up some little task lying by ready for her mother's hand, completed it, and again sat down.

"Did you hear anything since?" she asked, at last.

* The vocative case of *Mauria*, Mary.

"Not a word," answered Johanna.

"He was talking iv it himself a while ago," said Mary.

"Well, my heart?"

"An'—like a fool as I was—I said, 'May be he wouldn't come to us.'"

"An' what for did you say that, child?"

"Wisha, I dun know, mother!"

"Don't, alanna, machree!" said Johanna; "don't! Things are quare enough; but there's nothing to cry for, thank God. There, have done now, Mary!" and she wiped Mary's eyes with her own apron, and kissed her forehead.

"He got stomached* at that, an'—"

"Now, Mary, I wandher at you! you that used to have sense. There's no harum done, you'll see. Many's the word we say that we don't main; an' John knows that as well as another. He'll come round to it again in good time. 'Rome wasn't built in a day.' Hould up your heart, like a good girleen, an' dhry your eyes, or the people 'll say I tuk the Betty-birch te you."

"What you never did! What you never did!" cried Mary, bursting out afresh.

"Well, I declare to you, I think I'll have to do it now, for the first time; an' bait you well if you don't behave. Though, faix, 'tisn't for your bad spinning," Johanna continued, catching sight of the thread twisted around Mary's arm, and, taking it off, "no wan could bait you for that."

Mary smiled through her tears at Johanna's smile.

* Hurt.

"Put it up for me now, an' make yourself at home, as your father says. I'm sorry he wint onto from us at all."

"I'm glad he did, for wance. I'm the better o' that, I b'lieve."

"Well, let me see you are. There, take your sait again, my heart."

Though no more passed on this one subject, their thoughts were too full of it to allow of entering upon any other. And after a little time longer, spent in looking at her mother and around the house, Mary rose to return home. Soothed and half satisfied, she strolled slowly through the fields in much the same manner that she had so many a day long ago, and looking rather like a careless girl than the *vanithee* she was; saving that her head hung more heavily than it used in those past times. She felt, as it were, at both sides of her heart, the comfort and the want of full sympathy; yet did not choose to examine too closely the pleasure or the pain.

Half an hour later John's dinner smoked on the table, and on a Sunday table-cloth. And the half playful "Hoi—y!" from Mary herself, which called him to it, and the smile that welcomed him when he came, put off all direct recurrence to the morning's little spar.

"Is it beginning to be grand we are?" John asked, half-playfully, too, in his own way of being so.

This might have set all wrong again, had Mary been less self-subdued. She replied with that happy natural indirectness which, as often perhaps as a studiedly mild answer, turneth away wrath:

"'Twill never be any grander than I'd like it for ourselves, John."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Sunday came, with weather fine but frosty. After Mass, at a country chapel, nearer than that of Farrenstown to both farms, the two husbands and their wives stood together at the chapel gate. Connor and John were in waiting for a party going to a neighbour's funeral.

"Faix!" Johanna said to Connor, "wan 'ould think 'twas to a wedding you were going; you look as gay as a lark."

"Well, I'm glad 'tisan't anybody I'd be sorry for," said Connor; "an' I can't help that. But, tell me now, for wance, as ye're not going yourselves, wouldn't ye let other people go as they like?"

"They 'ont expect me to go, I think. An' they all know Mary is a nurse," said Johanna. "But I'd have both o' ye look a little sarious, for decency's sake."

"An' if we're not sorry purtend we are?" said John.

"I don't want ye to purtend anything; an' I don't think ye need do it. I b'lieve nobody is very sorry for the poor man that's gone. But, at the same time, if a body only thought of how soon it might come to their own turn, they'd want no sorrow to make 'em look sober."

"You're in the right iv it there, Ma'am," said John.

"She knows she always is," said Connor.

"They're going now!" said Mary.

Both men moved on their way, but it was some time before either spoke again. Each seemed settling with himself some moot point; and each scanned the other's countenance, as though seeking there his own thought, when he felt that that other's eye was not on him. And, at length, each, as though from a common impulse, suddenly spoke out upon a topic three thousand miles away: the position and prospects of the children of the man whose corpse they went to meet. And they soon were deep in talk, with neighbours who had a real interest in the matter, on the comparative merits of the eastern and western ports of the United States, as landing-point for an emigrant.

Meantime Johanna and Mary wended their way towards Scrowthea, where both families were to meet for that day's dinner. They talked of trifles: any conversation on the matter that both had in mind being rendered inexpedient by the presence of Mary's boys. Jerry, the elder, in all respects his father's son, had a turn for listening to grown-up people's conversation. He would follow young Connor in his frolics, only to return after a moment, and again pace on slowly with the elders, holding on to the skirt of his mother's gown despite her occasional, "Let go o' me, Jerry! you're threading on me, child!" There was no getting rid of Jerry till all had arrived at the turn of the *borheen*, leading directly to the farm house. Then, with a parting pluck, he said—

"Will you give it to me, now, an' I'll run on an' meet her."

"It" was a sugar-stick for little Hannah.

"No," Mary said, "I'll give it to Connor, because he didn't taise me; you never stopped at me, though you heer'd your gran'mother talking to me."

"Give me wan of 'em. I don't care what wan it is," said little Connor.

"What wan, child?"

Connor glanced at his grandmother, and blushed.

"Here's this for you to take to her, Jerry," Johanna said. Because of a secret preference for little Connor, she made a point of outwardly favouring the bigger boy.

"Why don't you say, 'Thank you, Ma'am?'" said his mother.

"Thank you'm," grumbled Jerry.

The cake was not large enough to allow of claiming a share in it; with the sugar stick it would have been different.

"'Ma'am,' Sir!"

"Ma'am."

"Ma'am, Sir," archly repeated little Connor.

"Here, and off with you, you little monkey," said Mary, as she gave him the sugar-stick, withdrawn from its double wrapping, put on "for fear o' getting the sugar iv it on her Sunday gown."

"Come, now, an' we'll see who'll be first!" cried Connor.

"Now, we can walk on in paice an' quietness," said Mary.

Accordingly, they walked up the *borheen* very *grauverly*,* which was the word that Connor

* That is, with a sort of dignity.

always used to describe Johanna's pace, but also very silently, and proceeded to rest themselves in the parlour.

"Mary," Johanna said, after a while, "things will come round some way to-day, I'm thinking."

Mary sighed. "'Tis a quare world," she said. "I often thought, lately 'twould be well for I never was in it."

It was the first time in her life that Johanna heard Mary speak bitterly, and it affected her so that she could not at once reply.

"As I am here," continued Mary, "I must only do the best I can. But the dear knows a bad best I'm afraid 'twill be."

"Fie, Mary! Nobody's best is bad, my heart. An' if you do yours, you're sure o' getting to a better world, whatever 'ill come to you here."

"Only for that, what 'ould I dô at all now! Go down to the boys, Hannah, me pet, an' tell 'em I bid 'em go aisy. My head is splitting with 'em; an' what must your's be that isn't used to 'em every day?"

Here a louder roar from Connor led her down in person.

"Wan 'ould think 'tis a-purpose ye are," she said, "when your grandmother is here. Go out now, like good boys, an' thry would ye see dada coming, an' gran'dadda. Don't go too far, now."

"But, where's too far?" queried Connor, as he reached the threshold.

"Come on, will ye!" said Jerry. "You think that's great wit, now?"

"Well, an' why didn't you say it if it isn't?"

"You heard wan o' the big boys say it."

"I didn't."

"You did."

"Say that again! Oh! that's the way you're always, you say a thing, an' then you won't stand to it like a man."

"Here, come along, if you're coming," said Jerry, who, glancing back, had seen his grandmother at the window, looking at them. And they went off peaceably together.

"'Twill be a change from Culiraike House," said Johanna to herself. "Well, beggars can't be choosers."

CHAPTER XXIX.

"I want to know, be the way o' no harum, how ye're goin' to settle this bit o' business?" Connor said, as he stirred his tumbler of punch after the Sunday dinner.

"Mary says, may be he wouldn't come to uz," replied John.

"She didn't know what she was saying that time."

"I b'lieve so meself: but the women must have their own way."

"An' who has a betther call to it?" said Connor. "They have that from their mother."

"I'd like to see *my* way before me though, before I'd go to any expense, if it wasn't wanted."

"Just so," agreed Johanna; "but it will be wanted you may be sure. Where else has he to

go to, (Lord help him for an unfortunate craiture of a man!) afther all his money an' his land, money an' money's worth?"

"To make all sure, why I'll ask him," Connor said. "Mary can be doin' whatever is to be done—"

"An' 'tisin't much, an' she 'ont be long nor lazy about it," put in Johanna.

"—In the maintime; an' she can let me know when she'll be ready."

"I'm told," John said queringly, after a moment's pause, during which Mary had left the room and was seen going by the meadow towards the barn—glad, perhaps, of the excuse offered by milking-time to leave the others to their further talk, "I'm told that the third life o' Cuilraike didn't dhrop when they said it did; an' that there may be another change wan o' these days."

Johanna looked at Connor to be silent; and so Connor was.

"What do you think, sir?" continued John.

"I see no likelihood iv it," Connor answered, when thus put to the question straightforwardly.

"I'm told there is," repeated John, "that there'll be two words about the old place yet."

"I'm told 'tis the way that wan—" he resumed, looking after Mary and lowering his voice, "that wan that thought she had no great raison to be thankful to him long ago got Pethereen Beg to let on he was dead when she had him over with her; hearing tell how the other lives dhropped, an' how the Squire couldn't pay the fines."

"If she did that!" exclaimed Johanna, "she—"

"She did not," interrupted Connor, as hastily.

"I don't b'lieve it. Instead o' that—may be 'tis the very contrhary she'd like to do, the poor craiture! for the sake o' the wan that had a claim on both iv 'em, far asunder as they were."

"Likely story!" ejaculated John, "not giving you the lie, sir. It seems be all I hear, that no wan can tell who the news come to, nor how it come to this part o' the counthry at all, at all. If it was a thrue bill 'twould find somebody to back it."

This was a favourite phrase with John, and employed as though an unanswerable argument.

"I won't put my name to it, for wan," Connor returned in a half-jesting tone.

"Oh! if you did, sir, there 'ould be no more to be said again it: every wan 'ould know 'twas thrue then."

"You're right in that at any rate, John," said Johanna.

"An' may be I'll turn out to be right in more!" persisted he. "I hear me father tell what a good thing the old Squire thought he did for the young man that was then, when he put a Landy in the laise o' Cuilraike estate. 'Twas a betther life' he used say to the old tenants, 'than wan that takes his four mails a day, or may be five, an' the bottle o' wine afther some iv 'em; an' that he didn't see why little Pether 'ouldn't live to his ninety-nine years like his gran'father before him. Bein' Palentines* on the father's side, an' the mother come of a family that had no back in the coun-

* Palatines, i.e. of the German settlers 'planted' in lieu of the "Irishry."

thry, he'd say there wasn't even the chance iv his getting a broken head at a faction fight again him.' He couldn't foresee these times: there was no thought o' goin' to America then. 'Twas the onlucky day he pitched upon Pethereen Beg! that's the rael thruth at all evints."

"The rael thruth is, John," said Johanna, "that there can't be much luck where there's no grace!"

"That's the way to say it, mo Colleen dhas!" approved Connor.

"But to tell me," pursued John, "that he come to his end in such a way! the very week he landed in New Orleans, walking the streets quiet and aisy to be shot dead with a shot intended for another man! I couldn't b'lieve that. Why Jerry outside there would make up a betther story for you. It hasn't the face o' thruth on it."

And for that very reason, if for no other, Connor, much the shrewder of the two men, would have said he believed it, had he spoken, but he did not speak.

John, however, as though impatient alike of contradiction and of not being contradicted, went on with his own argument:—

"Since the married sisthers went down the counthry among their own clan, did any wan ever hear o' their sending an account to any o' the old neighbours?"

"Well, you know, there was some raison for that same," Johanna said.

"Well! an' is it likely they'd begin now, 'ithout a raison, ma'am, to send news unless it

was to them that had an interest in making out that it was throe?"

"'Tisn't far to seek, as the saying is, how news goes up or down," rejoined Connor, as Johanna kept silence: "you needn't go past that fellow we met on the road home today—an' others like him: wouldn't he give you an' me the news of everything that happened from here to Ra'keale for three months back, if we'd lose our time hearken-ing to him? An' what does a gentleman want an agent for, but to keep his eyes an' ears open, an' wide open for everything that regards his employer's intherest? An' what could regard it more than a chance o' getting possession of a fine thraet o' land in good heart an' held, as a body may say, at a peppercorn rent these three hundred years or more! Why, I suppose for generations they had the sharp watch to catch wan o' the Garlands thripping. God help the poor man that did thrip at long last!"

"I know wan thing, beyond yea or nay," persisted John, "*he* had a right to keep a watch on Pethereen Beg himself. So many o' the neighbours goin' to America he could aisy do it. An' if it cost something, betther lose a thrifle that way than lose all; an' if it come to pass itself, why many a betther man dies that isn't put in the newspapers."

"'Tis a question," Connor said, as though it was a point thought over or discussed before, "if 'twould be an honest man's part to keep the news sacrit (if he had the choice to do it), unless he saw his way to make up the fines and pay his way fairly."

"I'd like to catch him telling it if no wan else knew it!" John said: "an' if it was thrue. I'm told for certain *she's* in America, and married dacently there."

"She may be in America now, an' she may be married dacently too, I'll b'lieve that if you like," returned Connor, goodhumouredly: "but I 'ont b'lieve she ever tuk pen in hand to thry to injure them she left behind her for good an' all so long ago."

"Every wan says Pethereen Beg was the bittherest o' the whole family again her; an' that 'twas he got the ould man to be so severe on her all out."

"That may be; that's Pethereen Beg's own look out wherever he is now."

"No wan knows what she wint through from that to this—though she may be well off now. An' for what 'ould she persuade him an' help him, as they say she did, to go over to be near her, him that turned the back iv his hand on her, and threw her out on the wide world?"

"This poor man even didn't let her go empty-handed, bad as the rest was," Johanna said.

"For what?" repeated Connor, heedless, for once of the intervention of his Colleen dhas: "for what man, do you say? For the love o' the merciful God that sent herself better fortune than she deserved, and sent her grace to soften her heart along with it. An' I'll tell you what, John, if you an' Mary do the good act for God's sake too, why if you get no return here out of Cuilraike, you'll be sure to get it hereafter in a better place."

"Well, an' that's thrue beyond doubt," assented John; "still they say there's no smoke without fire."

To this, said in an under tone, nobody responded. And as Mary, having duly set the maids to the milking in the barn, now re-entered to her guests, there was no likelihood that John would further pursue the topic, so let drop.

"You have cold comfort in that dandy o' punch now, Mary child," Connor said; "why didn't you take it before you went out? If anything stands, let the work stand, you know; especially of a Sunday."

"That's the way she takes it when she takes it at all, at all," John said, who approving Mary's sobriety no less, Connor shrewdly guessed, on the score of economy than of morality, never failed to give her openly her merit on that point. And having said so much with evident complacency, as though it, being hers, was part and parcel of his own good qualities, he finished his own larger though moderation share in silence: drawing his thin lips into a very expressive grimace after every sip. A notion that Connor would be unwilling to admit the probability of Mary's owing any benefit to another than himself served to fix John's narrow mind in the belief that the report about Cuilraike "would turn out to be a thrue bill." After a time, as soon as politeness, to his thinking, permitted, he left the parlour for the kitchen, in order to smoke his evening pipe. Connor was no smoker. And Johanna, as John knew, disliked tobacco. There then he settled himself down at ease; raked from the fire a small "seed" of

turf, and held it with the tongs against the pipe, Then leaning back against the wall, by which the wooden block on which he sat was placed, he gave himself up to the full enjoyment of this the only luxury that he with full free will allowed within his doors. Now and again he took the pipe from his lips, and putting his finger on the bowl, seemed to give entire attention to his thoughts. A covert smile passed and repassed across his countenance: the weird light from brands of bog-wood, flaming up or failing as they were replaced or renewed by one of the maids, giving it a sadly suitable character of mockery.

"I'll give you till—let me see? 'Tis as good not to fix the day, but do you be getting ready things as soon as you can, an' your mother 'll let you know when I'm goin' over. 'Twould be as well to have all right here beforehand, not to be putting him off when it comes to the point," Connor said to Mary as they parted.

* * * *

Whilst John, acting on Mary's suggestion, conveyed the elder couple on their way, going with them to his own bound's-ditch, little was spoken, and nothing further on the subject of the evening. And throughout the rest of their rather untimely walk home, Connor and his Colleen dhas plodded on in unusual and thoughtful silence. But when Connor had settled himself beside his own hearth, he said, musingly,—

"I wish I was as sure of heaven, as I am that you, John Meany, will never put a copper in your

pocket out of Cuilraike, nor your children afther you, while grass grows or wather runs."

"I'm afear'd 'tis thrue for you," assented Bhanna. "But if this man himself outlives the ould lady abroad, won't he have his claim on the house then? and that ought to be worth something."

"I have me doubts iv it," answered Connor; "an' very strong doubts, too, my good woman."

"But, sure, 'twas a separate take an' a separate landlord."

"An' the rent, say you, next to nothing. That's a thrue bill, as John says. But, in the first place, the ould dowager is just as likely to outlive him. She has little to throuble her, I dar' say; nothing to do but to mind her lap-dog, may be. An' I see a great change in him this last year or two; he broke down greatly. Suppose he does outlive the old madame, (as he ought, in the course o' nature), an' that he has a rael hold o' the house, he could put the screw on our new landlord, beyond all doubt, an' squeeze something han'some out iv him. But you see, mo Colleen dhas, that's what I think there's good raison to doubt. I never got at the ins an' outs o' that part o' the business, an' I'd rather not know 'em just now. But, I hear the ould squire—an' he was a shrewd, long-headed man—was never known to be talkative about that little take from the Hawkses. When his brother laised that bit o' land that nobody thought worth much, as it was then, I suspect he made a loose bargain in his hurry to square the ould demesne, an' build the fine new house he left so soon afther to his

purty young widow along with her jointur'; an' that the Hawkes's (rogues in grain as they wor', an' are) managed to put a crooked claw in the bargain, wan way or other. 'Tis very aisy to laive a nice little flaw—as aisy as dhrop a stitch in your stocking—in a laise, if a man hasn't all his eyes open, aye, an' eyes in his poll too, that you could turn to account ather if you see 'twas worth while to thry it. That sthruck meself many a time sence Farren Hawkes put a bad hand in the Squire. An' I'm almost sure I'm right be what the poor man said to me wan day, thrying to make a joke of his throubles, of how his uncle was a goose before him; an' so 'twas kind for him to let himself be plucked be a Hawkes. There may be law yet about it, between Farren Hawkes's creditors and our new landlord, if all Hawkes's affairs are raked up in the courts. But I'm greatly mistaken if this poor man doesn't be left where he is, on the ground, low enough, between the two stools. So, mo Colleen dhas, whatever change we can make in his affairs ourselves is all the change we can make sure of for him, come what will to Cuilraike House, or land. But, 'tis time for us to sleep an' forget him now for a while, at any rate.

CHAPTER XXX.

On the day appointed for his mission, Connor set off at once loath and willing to go; needing, and yet not needing, the instances of the Colleen dhas; for, as he told her, "it was only his courage that gev' way; an', in them cases, there was nothing like a woman's tongue for bringing it round." Making what he called "a circumbendibus o' the house," he succeeded in attracting the notice of Nance Kettlewell without a formal application for admittance at the door; and so quietly made his way, following her, to his former landlord's former library. Everything in the mansion appeared altered and out of place, saving only the stag-hunt, in brown and white, which so long had held its course along the paper-hangings of the hall and stair-case, and which Connor, for the first time, followed up. It touched his heart to yet greater tenderness towards the poor old huntsman now himself at bay. Carefully wiping his shoes, on a mat not held good enough to take away, he entered, hat in hand.

"Well, Connor?" enquired Mr. Garland.

Under other circumstances it would have been "Kennedy." Connor observed so much to himself.

"Well, your honour," he replied, "I just tuk the liberty of coming over to inquire after you."

"It is after me you'll be enquiring before long,

if you continue to take that trouble," said the Squire, with a miserable laugh

"I hope not, Sir; an' I thrust not," Connor said.

"I believe you are the only one here that cares," Connor.

"Not the only wan, Sir; there are two more, if they might make so bold on you."

Mr. Garland's parti-coloured visage flushed full red, but he said nothing.

"That little girl an' her husband, Sir," pursued Connor.

"A girl I forgot when I could serve her?" said the Squire.

"Well, Sir, 'tis no business nor wish o' mine, nor indeed o' theirs, to bring that up to you, now. Better late than never. If you remember her now, she an' her husband 'ill be proud to do their part towards you."

The pride of the aristocrat caught at, and clung to what seemed the saving word. His notions had not been refined by the passage through his moneyed trials, and possibly never had been nice enough to suggest how poor a pride this would be in John Meany's case.

"Mary was on'y waiting for your laive to come an' tell you herself what she felt at your—"

"Fall," supplied the Squire.

"Oh, many a man falls to rise again," Connor said, cheerily.

"Not so I, Connor."

"Well, Sir, time enough to talk o' the future; time enough to bid *somebody* good morrow when you meet him. Your room is settled an' ready for

you ; an' Mary is like, I dun' know what," he continued, rejecting the comparison that had come to his lips—"a hen with an egg"—"about you ; anxious to know if you'd come to her, the poor *cotleen*."

The Squire looked up, and around him ; up, at the sunless lowering November sky ; round, on the bare frost-bound earth. No escape, no resource. "To dig, I am unable ; and to beg, I am ashamed." He did not know by heart much of his Bible, and this little did not come to comfort him.

"To-day or to-morrow, Sir ?" asked Connor, softly.

"To-morrow, be it, then," answered the Squire.

Heaven knew what humiliation, regret, remorse, perhaps swelled within his heart at these few words. But no token of such appeared. He looked relieved, Connor thought. In the position that he stood in, the prospect of any refuge well might give him that sensation.

"Well, then, Sir, I'll be on the look out to meet you, an' walk over with you, if you have no objection, towards the dinner hour ?"

"Thank you, Connor."

Without more words, Connor took his leave, no less formally than he had entered, and closed the door gently on his landlord's pride and shame.

Johanna looked at him questioningly, as he walked into their own parlour, took his customary seat, smacking his lips the while in seemingly high satisfaction.

"Surely," he said, "nothing tastes so sweet in

the mouth as what a man says for the love o' God!"

"I never doubted you for telling a story your own way," said Johanna. "Well?"

"Well, here I am, afther butthering up that ould landlord o' mine, as I never did for his favour or his land, an' as I'd scorn to do for his estate."

"I hope you didn't butther him up too much, Connor. When a man has to go in on another man's floor, (an' with little or no claim on it), if misfortchune brought down his pride, 'twouldn't be for you to blow it up again. 'Twouldn't be a good job for any iv 'em."

"*'Gear an gad is giorra na scorna,*' 'cut the knot next to the throat,'" quoted Connor. "You needn't be afeerd, mo Colleen dhas, for that you are still, though they say you're getting gray."

"An' what do you say?"

"Oh! I say nothing. May be 'tis to get me head in me hand I would. But, about this gentleman iv ours—"

"He'll go, of course?"

"Of course, he'll go. An' if we can break his misfortchune to him any way, we may do it with a safe conscience, you may be sure. There's no great fear any man 'ill be too comfortable in another man's house. John Meany isn't exactly the son-in-law I'd chose for Squire Garland; though he's a good boy enough in his way. If it was to do again, I dun' know if I'd choose him for meself. But, sure their match was made as our own was."

"It is made now, any way," observed Johanna.

"You may say that; so the less more we say iv it the betther."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A leaving for ever of the house of one's ancestors, the home of many generations, is to one's imagination a sorrow of the grand sort, a grief too desolate for details. But to seem, or indeed be thoroughly such, there must be women to undertake the background incidents that are so entangling, so distracting, sometimes, alas! so ludicrous to those who must conduct them. In the one case, a man may quit his hearth like Coriolanus; in the other, he is much more apt to leave it like the Squire.

Nance was not, through any self-forgetfulness of her's, in the humour to dignify his last proceedings. The furniture left in the house by the soft-hearted Mahaffy was, seemingly, at the Squire's disposal. No one came to claim it, or was likely to come, on behalf of Mrs. Letitia Garland. And he now had to settle with, or rather against Nance what portion of this was to requite her time and trouble; and what might add to his own future comfort, or be acceptable to his future hosts. His estate had passed from his hands with more facility than did this remaining little all, to which he never had had title.

"Nance, I told you before—"

"An' before again," interrupted Nance. "I don't see what talk you have at all about the han'ful o' things that's there. Of coorse, if any wan comes aafter 'em what I'll have 'ill be safe

for 'em. But I can on'y spaik for meself. I can't say if other people 'ill act as honourable. I don't want to spaik ill in any wan, nor to intherfere in family affairs ; but I'll say this to you, for your own good, whether you take it well or ill o' me, that a man can't shut his hand on what you don't put in it. Now take your own coorse. You think the worst that's there good enough for Nance, an' let me see who else 'ould think so much iv 'em? I that rubbed an' polished 'em many a time, *an' knew what belongs to 'em !*"

Then Nance had to be propitiated with another article or two on which she had looked lovingly. In a long parting, one wishes to part friends. All this and its etceteras had well nigh brought about an early dinner-hour ; so that at last the Squire had to hasten away : relief his last sensation. The gates closed behind him for the last time, and he had not leisure to look back. He was glad to take a short cut to the meeting with Connor Kennedy. How best to assume his new ties was the question now : the old were broken, the past was past.

No design could better have timed his arrival at Scrowthea. As, after the welcome given and taken, (none but Connor could tell how,) Mary had perforce to absent herself from the parlour "to see afther the bit o' dinner." It was full time for Connor to return for his own meal ; and his untaught tact led him to "slip away quiet an' aisy, as if he was used to seeing *him* there every day in the year." And John, after playing host during an awkward few minutes, with the aid of

Little Hannah seated on his knee, easily found a pretext for withdrawing.

"Some complain of them (i. e. potatoes) yet," Mr. Garland said, in continuation of the topic most easy of discussion.

"Well, sir, they're not bad with uz. But people 'ill be always complaining: whin we haven't wan thing to say—aisy, Chevauneen!*"—we say another why. 'Ont ye stay with dada? You 'ont? Well, aisy, an' I'll take you down. They're taking up the pots below, an' you'll scald yourself."

"And what would the little woman do then? She could not get upon her feet at all!" said Mr. Garland to Chevauneen.

"She's the most restless crature," said John. "There! we're going now, sure. May be you'd come out 'ith dada; an' tell Ned to go cut soil for Rover that you're so fond of? That 'ould be the best o' your play if I don't mistake."

Alone and unwaited on, the Squire felt more like one dropped into a sort of second home. Then the dinner supplied topics safe and easy to enlarge on. These, mingled with not undue compliments to Mary's cooking, lasted the meal through.

And when, dinner over, he drew his chair nearer to the fire, and to that corner in which he once had with such bitterness contemplated himself, he wondered at his present feelings. He wondered at them till he dozed over them awhile. He could not resist the sweetness of the sleep that follows certainty, when, let its lot be ever so hard,

* *Little Johanna.*

the mind is fain to rest as suspense is relieved guard. John whispered from behind his hand to Mary, that "that'll pass a piece o' the evening for uz all."

When the Squire aroused himself there was only Mary to make his excuses to; and she "was only glad the chair wasn't too unaisy for him to take his rest in." This falling into the universal custom of old age had brought him nearer to her simple mind, and she felt him more at home with her after it. Their talk was, if disjointed, not ungenial, and John on rejoining them put in a word now and again "to stop a gap," with tolerable ease to himself. They separated for the night, all glad that this day had come and gone. The Squire reconciling the custom of his own sphere, and his ignorance of what might be expected at Scrowthea in this particular of parting with an attempt at shaking hands with little Hannah.

CHAPTER XXXII.

But oh, that waking in the morning, not knowing what to do, and without one's own home in which to do nothing gracefully! This, the gentleman's accomplishment by excellence, was, if he possessed it, but a burden to the Squire.

He rose, dressed, and perhaps prayed, if he was accustomed so to do; then he came from out his room. No one was in the parlour when he entered

it. An arm-chair from Cuilraike, just arrived, was set for him in the more comfortable corner of the fire-place, and, after a glance at the gray-green fields and gray-blue sky of a foggy morning, he sat down. The fire smoked a little. The making of it in the parlour was a new week-day duty, and probably was ill done.

"What a grand chair he has for himself!" said little Connor to Jerry in the passage without the parlour door.

After a while the three children edged in gradually, drew near and stood behind him. During the eve, they had been kept at a respectable distance, and in solemn order; now they had the ground to themselves. And very curiously they peered at the old man—for old he looked—who sat there doing nothing, and still more, giving them nothing.

The Squire drew little Hannah to his side. She laid her hand observingly upon his broad cloth trousers, and looked at it and him alternately.

"Who am I?" he asked.

"I dun' know," she said, bashfully.

"That's a lie!" said Jerry.

"Well; and who am I?"

"You're ould Dick Garland, that used to live up in the big house at Cuilraike," said the bold boy.

"And I'm come to live here with mamma now. Will you be fond of me, little woman?"

"She 'ont thin. What 'ould she be fond of you for?" responded Jerry in high-low tone.

"I'm your grandpapa, don't you know: grand-

father, granddada?" pursued the Squire, following the expression of the faces round him, to make sure of being understood.

"Sure granddada lives over Wesht there!" said little Hannah, with a half-frightened flippancy.

"Don't you know that every little boy and girl has two grandfathers, gran'dada's?"

"—An' gran'mama lives with him: where's your gran'mama?"

"Go 'long away this moment, an' get your books till yer breakfast is ready!" cried Mary. Pausing at the door, she was pleased to see, as she thought, a making of friends, but shocked and confused at hearing this query as she advanced into the room. "You mus'n't be idling this way in the morning," she concluded.

"They used to tell me the morning was the best time for books," said the Squire, glancing placably towards the boys. "He who rises to seek wisdom in the morning—" The Squire had his text pat enough, having learned it time and again when he himself went to school; but was stopped by the obvious and very awkward association of ideas awakened by the ending: "shall find her at his door."

"He hasn't his own task," whispered Connor to Jerry.

"The master was complaining o' you too—Jerry in particular," pursued Mary.

"They'll be good boys, both of them;" the Squire said. "A very intelligent young man, I am told, their master is."

"Oh! 'tisin't to him they go at, sir," returned Mary. "John thinks the National School is a

port of charity school, an' he 'ouldn't hear o' their going there. They go to the master he went to himself. He's not an old man, to say, aither; very sthrong an' hearty: not beyand his labour at all."

"But he can hardly be as good a teacher as the trained master," observed the Squire, who knew not well what else to say.

"He'd sack three iv him!" said Jerry, from his corner.

"O, ho! so you'd fight his battles for him, I suppose."

"Here, John! breakfast is ready for you," called Mary from the door-way. The boys, in order to hasten them away to school, were soon and hurriedly helped. John was going to a fair, and hurried too: and the little scene closed in dumb show.

Some hours after breakfast had worn by, and Mr. Garland was beginning to feel how heavily time was passing, and to wish for almost anything to occupy him, and prevent Mary thinking it needful to come up to the parlour every now and then, when he caught the sound of Connor Kennedy's voice from the yard; and rising gladly, he walked down to meet him.

Connor was entering the kitchen. He was preceded by a servant-boy, bearing over head and shoulders a noble side of beef.

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Mary, as the burden was cast upon the table.

"Hold your tongue, child!" returned Connor. "Don't you know that 'tisn't every day that Roger kills a cow?"

Mr. Garland looked on; half in pain, half in pleasure; pain at being the recipient of his old tenant's bounty, pleasure (it must be owned getting the mastery) at the beef's being there: such beef as he could appreciate; young, ruddy, juicy. And pleasure soon merged into the eagerness of the connoisseur to see it cut up and allotted properly. This was an office customary enough with country squires to scrupulously fill; but which Mr. Garland's long bachelorhood had made doubly his. He now even took knife in hand himself, when Mary boggled at some cross-jointing, and did not lay it down till he had carried out Connor's "promise that he'd make a dacent job iv it."

Seeing him and Mary thus amicably and agreeably occupied, Connor withdrew, escaping compliments. As he told Johanna, "when he sthruck the nail on the head he left it there, out o' hands."

"But what an eye those Yellow-Bellies* have for the good bit o' mait!" he continued to his Colleen dhas on his return. "That's the very thing he'd buy now if he had the money again, an' the heart. Why, thin, I dun' know, if 'tis because they ait mait iv a Friday they're such judges iv it?"

"Why, thin, never God tell ye!" said Johanna. "The Lord forgive me me sins!"

"Amen, whether you joke or not," said Connor.

"But of all the quair things ever a man said, you say 'em!"

"An' haven't I as good a right as another to say a quair thing?"

"Oh, faix, you have the right! an'—

* A common, if not proper, name for Protestants as a body.

"—You don't let it get rusty, says you. Well, Johanna, if you see the Squire, poor man, cutting up your two fine quarters, 'twould do you good. Afther all your years, 'tisin't clear to me but he'd taich yourself something."

"I suppose so."

"As to Mary, why she didn't know half the kernels an' bits that have a right to be cut out to keep it sweet and tendher at the same time, as he said."

"No harum for her to see 'em; learning is no load. He see mait cut up oftener than any of us certainly. It gave the poor man something to engage him for a spell o' the day."

"So I can't vex you about it?" said Connor.

"You cannot thin, me good man, an' do your best."

"'Tisin't often I can get a rise out o' you lately. Well; there's no help for those things, I suppose."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

During the evening of this same day, Connor was seated by his cheerful fire, his legs crossed, his arms folded, his eyes fixed upon the fiery sods. He was thinking, pausing, doubting, seemingly. Once or twice he turned his head slightly, and glanced towards his wife. At length, he exclaimed:

"I'll do it; 'I'll daar it!' as the little boys say."

"What'll you do?" asked Johanna, quietly.

"What 'ould you say to my getting back ~~my~~ twenty pounds from Mr. Garland? 'Ouldn't that be a good thing?" he replied, winking to himself, with the off eye from his Colleen dhas.

"Yerra, man, what's that you're saying?" she asked, drawing near, and crossing her hands upon the table. "Did I hear you right that time?"

"Faix, I hope you did," returned Connor, gravely. "I wouldn't fancy a bothered* wife at all: so I wouldn't, Mrs. Kennedy."

"Is it now?"

"'Tis now, or never, why?"

"Why, thin, never be it, if that's the way it is. I thought it a good dail to give him, when you gev' it. But to laive him without a penny in his pocket, in John Meany's house—supposing he has it in his pocket—an' you the mains o' putting him in there! He'd want it to bury him, if 'twas nothing else. Faire go dheo!† Is it now, now you'd ask him for it?"

"Now, now, now? what else? '*Nios niage arsan Sassenach, 'us é a bathadh.*'"‡

* Deal.

† Fie, for shame.

‡ "More water!" cried the Protestant, "and he a-drowning?" At the foot, or, in the commoner local phrase, at the butt of Slievenamon and in the county of Tipperary, lies the pool, known as "Poul-na-t-sassenach," the Protestant's Pool, beside which this popular saying took its rise. It was a custom of the gentry in this district, to summon their tenantry to meet them upon sporting ground, in order to beat the bush for game, and, from a more exact knowledge of the country, to act more or less as guides near dangerous spots. Some time during the last century, a meet of this sort—part "crockery," part "china"—took place under the southerly wind and cloudy sky that sportsmen love. The hunt turned towards the above named spot, where a watercourse plunging down the mountain side, leaps from a ledge above a steep ravine, and sinks

"Well, there isn't such another big fool in the world as I am!" cried Johanna, sitting down to laugh at ease. "Sure it ought to be time for me now to know what you'd do. May be, 'tis the way you're going to lend him more?"

"Well?" said Connor, watching her.

"How much?"

"'Pon my own word, 'tis not."

"I can't say I'm sorry you aren't," said Johanna, prudently; "but 'twould be more like you than the other thing."

"But, in airnest, what 'ould you think o' me making him a present o' that bay mare iv his? 'Tis mine now, out an out, if I choose to make me own iv it be virtue o' the decree he got me to get against it awhile ago."

"What while ago? That's the first I hear iv it."

"Well, 'twon't be the last. Three months ago it was. Sure, you know, when the barristher was here; he didn't come downf my case, you may be sure."

into a pool of unknown depth, surrounding it with foam and fury. A particularly unpopular "Black-Blue" was of this morning's meet, and his horse, possibly more thorough-bred than its master, took head, darted down a path on which to stop was impossible, bore him straight on the ravine, and horse and man dropped like a shot into the pool. The hunstmen of low degree were nearest to him in the chase, and they drew as near as might be to the spot, and stood still till they felt that all was over. No aid could reach the unhappy man; water whirling, drew him down below; water foaming, overwhelmed him from above; and only a goat could quickly reach the pool.

"More" the cry of the horse-leech, probably had been the burden of the petty despot's life. For, after the first hush of horror at his fate, the detestation that outlived his deeds found expression in the bitter irony that rendered his death-cry into the words, "More water!"

Johanna stood still.

"I never expected to see a pound nor a penny o' that twenty pounds again; an', thanks be to God, I didn't feel it, nor wouldn't," pursued Connor.

"An' is it for his own riding you'd give him the mare, or laive it to him?" asked Johanna.

"'Tis."

"Well, I won't cross your hand."

"Why, thin indeed, I knew you 'ouldn't. 'Twill take him out o' the way iv a dail that might be onpleasant. What 'ould he do sitting in the corner from morning till night? He'll be his own man for a while in the day, at any rate. An' if he comes across his ould friend the Colonel, or the parson, or Sir Henry—*ma's frind é?**—why, if they give him the go by, he can give 'em as good as he gets. The counthry is wide enough for 'em all."

"Why, thin, indeed an' indeed, I'm glad you had that thought."

"Yerra! yes; where's the good o' having your heart in a thrifle? We must laive it all afther us wan o' these fine days."

"Give him the grass iv it, too," said Johanna.

"That'll laive John nothing to say. An' 'twill be an occupation for him to come across an' see it bridled an' saddled. We can command our own boys; an' may be that's more than Mary could do at all times. As you 'burned the candle'—"

"You want to 'burn the inch?'" interrupted Connor. "Blaze away, be the law! Let us see where you'll stop."

* "If friend he is," literally. But the bare translation does not give the full significance of the original words used as above.

"Faix, I'll stop where I am, as long as I'm kept."

"Don't hurry yourself, I beg," said Connor; "take your time, Mrs. Kennedy, take your time."

"May be, I'd take more time than 'ould be good for me, if I could have it all me own way. We must laive that to God. Well for us that we must, may be."

"May be, you'd be asking him to dinner, too, of an odd time, when he comes over?" resumed Connor.

"May be, I would, thin, just, as you put it in me head. I saw the day I'd think it an honour, I suppose."

"Why, thin, the never a day!" said Connor. "Don't belie yourself, honest 'oman. There never was a day that I'd think it an honour to me to give any man a good dinner, except the priests, may be."

"Well, hould your tongue; we 'on't quarrel about that."

"An' there's your friend Mahaffy," pursued Connor, with an arch look at her, "that had such a tendher heart, why, (Cauth knew him better:) he 'ouldn't leave a saddle on the poor baist! 'Twas the loan o' mine he had."

"An' is it a new saddle you'd give him with it?"

"Is it an ould wan I'd give him, now? an' am I never to ride again, if you plaise, ma'am?"

"God forbid," said Johanna, laughing. "But you are what you are, for wan man; an' it's little good to try to make anything else o' you."

"If any wan 'ould do it, you would, mo Colleen dhas, if you had a mind to thry."

"Have you the saddle there?"

"O, then how well you guessed it!"

"God reward you, Connor!" after a moment, she took a corner of her apron and wiped a tear from each of her eyes. "I b'lieve 'tis a'most time to go see afther the pick-pocket," she said; then.

"If anything stands, let the work stand," concluded Connor.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

When all parties had rubbed through the awkwardness unavoidable in the settling down together of persons so circumstanced, and so related, "It was surprising," Mary said to herself, "how well they all got on." John was, indeed, a trifle too obsequious to his father-in-law; but Mary knew too little of the world to draw its augury therefrom. He *effaced himself*, a Frenchman would say, more than most men are like to do for a continuance. "Hot love soon cools," and, "too good to last," were the forms in which this observation passed through the shrewd mind of Johanna, as she and her Connor strolled homeward through the fields after dining with the young couple and the old master on the Sunday following the settlement of the latter at Scrowthea.

"But," she added, also to herself, "I won't

throw cold water upon any iv 'em. Let time tell all."

Before long, however, even Mary saw some reason to desire her husband should show somewhat more of a-man-of-the-house manliness in his hospitality. While all in-doors thus proceeded upon velvet, or, upon that surface yet more yielding, servility, and, of course, while John was still firmly persuaded that a reversal of the sale of the demesne lands of Cuilraiike was certain to take place some fine day, the parish station time came round, and one was, as usual, published for Scrowthea.

"What are we to do now?" asked John, of Mary, on their way home from the Sunday's Mass.

"What about?"

"Why, about this station."

"What about?" repeated Mary; and this time a little testily.

"How 'ill *he* take it? May be he'd think it quair iv uz to have Mass in the house an' he there?"

"An' would you keep the Almighty out iv it because he's in it?"

"Oh, no! surely," John said, feeling the point of the question when so put.

"How 'ill he take it?" repeated Mary. "Let him take it well or ill, we'll have our station, please God. I 'ouldn't put it off a day on any wan's account, 'ithout more *raison* than *we* have."

"Why, to be sure," said John, "we haven't much *raison*; no *raison* at all, a body may say." And he looked sharply at his wife; a suspicion

passing through his mind that she might be in her father's confidence, and know that they never should have what he would call good reason for subjecting their arrangements to principle or prejudice of his. Mary neither noted the look nor guessed at the suspicion; but she felt that he had not thoroughly understood her words, and therefore she spoke no more upon the subject.

The station day came, and facilities for absenting himself from its observances, were offered Mr. Garland, but not availed of by that gentleman. He pretty well knew the minds of the people amongst whom he was born and bred; and, caring too—little saving socially—for his own creed, to feel any objection to joining on occasion in the rites of another, he chose to be present at the Station Mass, and that with perfect outward respect. Many of his old tenants were amongst the little congregation; and never, perhaps, met him with bow and curtsy more profound. Some of them, simple folk, fancied this morning's act but a forecast of his "going to Mass for good an' all with Mary." Mary did not suppose his attendance to have been prompted by anything higher than a courteous consideration for herself; but felt even that to warm her heart to him. While, through some hardly explicable complication of feelings, this compliance had on John a quite different effect. It more or less lowered his father-in-law in his eyes. And had the Squire then really gone to Mass for good, fulfilling the prediction of the neighbours, such change would possibly the sooner have brought him to appear a natural subject for that familiarity which, where fortunes have

fallen, so surely breeds contempt. Yet, this feeling of dissatisfaction—if it might be said to be so much—passed off with the occasion, and without in the least affecting outwardly John's complaisant good humour.

But this little incident took deeper hold on other minds just then. A few weeks after, "be the time," as Connor told it, "the news got round amongst the Goodies," an appeal was arranged; at the other side the parish, to Mr. Garland's presumed-to-be-wavering allegiance; and an emissary to unsuspectingly convey it found in the person of Billix, the rabbit catcher. Billix, who, despite some laxity of practice, "would as soon put his hand in a rat-thrap as take such a message to a holy Roman," was pretty well convinced that the Squire's religion was neither here nor there; and concluded therefrom, that, "be the law of arms, he might as well have the comfort o' bein' a Prodestant, if a Prodestant he'd be." So he just took the precaution of dropping in at Currahaly, and saying to "Herself," in the course of conversation,—

"The ould gentleman isn't going to Mass 'ith us over here, ma'am?"

"Indeed he isn't, Billix; an' take my word for it, he never will."

"That's about what I thought meself," he said. And, after a few more words on indifferent topics, he readjusted his sporting gear, and proceeded on his errand.

Watching his opportunity, he accosted Mr. Garland, and duly delivered his commands, to the effect "that some of his old friends were wishful

("that was the word, an' a quair word it was," Billix said to himself) to do something for him. But that they all, and especially his minister, felt that they could not conscientiously exert themselves for a gentleman who did not make his appearance at church. "Church," Billix substituted for "the house of God," and it was the only word he altered.

"Something for him!" and only now, when something had been found for him. The Squire brooded a moment, looking on the ground. Then his lips curled into a malicious smile at the sarcasm forthcoming against those friends, "for a con-si-de-ra-tion."

"Tell them," he said, "Billix, with my compliments, that I never went to church for religion, an' that I shan't go now for *soup*."

"Hur-r-roo!" shouted Billix, waving one arm round his head, and then slapping the Squire loudly on the shoulder. "Yerra, me darling man, I never doubted you. That's your sorte, Squire Garland! That's the way to say it, or not to say it at all."

"I'm not going the other way, though, Billix," said the Squire, with a fainter smile.

"Who knows, yet?" said Billix. "But, egor! if you don't itself, I forgive you for that saying, afther all. Eh? Eh? How Parson Bleakslee 'ill look at me! an' how innocent I'll repeat it, word for word, to his Reverence's Honour. 'Tell him,' says he, 'with my compliments—with Squire Garland's compliments,' says he, 'that I never wint to church for religion, an' that I 'on't go now

for soup. I'm blest, but that is the way to say it!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

The rumour as to Cuilraike's changing hands, again died away, as do the afterclaps succeeding the greater fall of greater dynasties. And the encumbered-estates-titled purchaser had settled down in evident security to his seed-time and his harvest. Yet there was no appearance of the rival attorneys whom John Meany had pictured, visiting Scrowthea, contending for the privilege of vindicating Mr. Garland's rights on the very pleasant and popular understanding of "no purchase, no pay." Nor yet did that gentleman himself seem prepared to take exception to the existing state of things. At length it became beyond mistake plain that there was no hope of resumption, by the Squire, of Cuilraike, or of any part of it. And John, having deceived himself, naturally became irritated against those on whom he could not lay the blame of having ministered to his delusion.

Naturally too, within the same space of time, Mr. Garland had come to feel at home; and had become more homely than perhaps under other circumstances his character would have permitted. He grew garrulous, not less with his descent in life than his descent in years. He returned with less bitterness upon the recent past, he dwelt

longer and more cheerfully upon his palmy days than might have been possible to him amongst his equals. And this table-talk acquired the hold of habit on him, as it ceased to seem to his son-in-law a sort of collateral security that "he surely would have his own again" in some remnant of his property. That notion once for all exploded, John Meany scorned whilst he envied the by-gones of the broken-down gentleman. An attention that would listen and still would not be pleased succeeded to the ready "yes, sir," and "ha, ha, 'twas so, surely!" Then a coarse though yet covert intolerance grew up in him towards "all this stuff that wasn't worth a whiff iv his pipe; an' that a man o' sence, an' a man that had any feeling in him, ought to put out iv his head intirely." And so the story begun with spirit would sometimes turn cold and short, and be followed with a sigh when the host stood up, chair in hand, just waiting with an ill grace to have it over; or filled up a pause for breath with "very fine; but that 'ouldn't shear the sheep for John Meany;" or "poor people must be minding their business." This change, however, came by small degrees; and many tales and many months were told and gone, before the Squire found himself reined up iv mid career with "We hear some-thin' o' that before; and" (going) "more than wance may be, an' we 'ouldn't care if we never hear the likes iv it."

"'Tis aisy to boast where there is no wan to conthradict him, but sure we all know he never was a game sportsman," would John continue to Mary, as he stopped in his passage through the

kitchen, making believe to look for something beside the occasion for a quarrel.

"Well, an' what harum, why, if it amuses him?" Mary would reply, half timidly.

"But it doesn't amuse me, woman, I can tell you: with his hunts with Sir Tom Marks, an' his how d'ye does from me Lord Castlehay! I wonder he hasn't the sperit to hould his tongue about 'em! so I do."

And so saying, John would walk off to his business; slamming the door of the kitchen all the harder, that he had not yet gathered courage—or, as he himself would phrase it, "wasn't man enough yet in his own house to give Mr. Garland a piece iv his mind," by slamming that of the parlour. His brute force of character was yet a while held in check somewhat by the subtle influence of habit.

Sad it is to recognize, that with all the experience of all our years, we are less wise in second childhood than in first. Our youth does not often repeat a chidden fault, but age is obstinate, and will not let by-gones be by-gones. Often hurt by it, yet persistently the Squire crossed an antipathy that day by day was growing stronger. Day after day, almost as regularly as he left his horse at Currahaly did he bring his story or his jest home with him to Scrowthea. The rejoinder or rebuff of, perhaps, the very eve, passed away with the wind; and he could not realize that it was in man not to be pleased with what came back upon himself so freshly, (the more freshly for being, as John shrewdly guessed, in part imaginary,) as he

cantered over the old head-lands,* or along the stiff stone fence where the same "Hoicks!" to the hounds and the laughter of the same huntsmen seemed to linger with the same echoes. And straight from those recollected meetings with men of whom some had condescended to himself, he at times unconsciously condescended in manner to John and John's equals. This made bad worse.

From observation of what it was that revived those reminiscences which John at last came to look on as an insult and defiance to him "on his own floore," came perhaps the strongest of the "good raisons" that led him to decide that this daily ride was an indulgence to which old Dick had no right, and one that he should not continue to enjoy.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Having come to this conclusion, John Meany kept it to himself yet a little. Still, as he brooded over his determination, the other grown inmates of the house were subtly conscious of some coming change. Mary took more than common pains to please him, and without feeling that she could succeed. This Mr. Garland observed; and his affection for her, though so late awakened, was not so dull as not to lead him to feel himself the cause. The children, too, received many a but half-merited cuff and pinch and snub. Little sallies such as at another time would be over-

* The untilled margin of fields is so called.

looked easily, or met with a half-encouraging discouragement were, as Mary said to herself, "made mountains of by John lately. She didn't know what was coming over him," she added, fain to deceive herself, for in her heart she did know well. While from time to time, she herself permitted matters really reprehensible to pass unremarked: "'twouldn't do to be for ever at 'em, poor children!"

With the children, then, this new-found rigidity and over-indulgence equally, each in its way, told against the Squire. The boys confided to each other the impression that "it must be ould Dick that was putting dada up to be always asking us our tasks; he spaiks so fine himself, why." And the result appeared in sly tricks and slow obedience, when no third party was by, and rude stares when they dared hazard nothing more.

A timidity sad and painful to witness in an old man to a young one, still more sad to feel, grew up through old Dick's demeanour to his son-in-law, and, as they grew older, ("big and bold," as Billix described them,) even to his grand-sons. John felt it; but there was not in him a jot of the generosity of nature of those who give way, half-subdued, on the admission of their power.

Little or nothing of the increasing uncomf-
ableness at Scrowthea was known to the good folk at Currabaly. To them the Girleen seemed pretty much as usual, since she always met them with her liveliest looks and words, let what might chance at home. The first hint that they received of the real state of things, was from Billix. He had been a frequent caller-in at Scrowthea,

from the date of old Dick's residence there. Often it was merely "to ask afther the ould mather;" but oftener to sell his rabbits, which, when in season, Mary almost always bought, as being "a dish that you might set before any man, an' still a chaip wan." She was anxious to make all matters connected with her father's maintenance to "come as light as possible" on John's purse. And the less cheerful household prospects looked, the more was Billix welcomed with his rabbits; until one forenoon, John interfered with his opinion: "That a man might live very well 'ithout mait another day now an' again as well as a Friday."

This piece of Papist abstinence the Squire had from the first insisted upon sharing in.

Billix went his way then to Currahaly, rabbits in hand.

"Well, Billix, you were over I suppose?" Johanna said, as she examined the pair put before her.

"They're all purty well, but they didn't want me to-day, seemingly," Billix said.

"No?"

"No, *go diriach!*"* repeated Billix, significantly. "The misthriss had a mind to buy 'em—an' nate they are as ever I sould, an' that's a big word; but himself seemingly wasn't inclined to 'em. He's tired o' rabbits may be," Billix added, with irony grave enough to deceive a stranger to John's circumstances. "'Tis lately come to him to ait 'em so often," he concluded, three parts to himself.

* Indeed.

"Well, 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good!" Johanna said after a moment's pause, during which she had appeared to be intently examining the second pair. "I'd want this brace, too, Billix."

"I never doubted you!" said Billix. "I couldn't wish to give you finer. Oh! you needn't look at 'em here nor there, 'tishn't here I'd bring 'em if they worn't the thing."

Connor, a newspaper in hand, was seated by the front door.

"Morrow, Billix," he said, as Billix who had come in by the back entrance, prepared to leave by this.

"Morrow, Mr. Kennedy," returned the latter, stopping at the threshold. "Well," he said, after a moment, "you gev Miss Mary a fine fortchune: but I'm sfeard you might have got her a betther man for the same money. I'm thinking it's Meany be name and mean-y be nature with that same Masther John. An' 'tishn't to-day that thought come into me head."

"May be he's a little black at times," Connor said, "but that's often an honest man's fau't."

"Well; be it so!" said Billix, shrugging the one shoulder from which the rabbits used depend. And bidding Connor and the Vanithee good-bye, he departed.

"Here, Cauth!" Johanna said to her milk-maid, a half-hour later, "as you go over to Nelly's, laive them at Mrs. Meany's; and tell her I didn't like to ask Billix to go over himself to her, he looked so wairy afther his morning, poor man! an' I know she'll like 'em for to-day."

Connor still was seated in the distance. Without overhearing, he perceived what was passing in the kitchen. He looked from Johanna to the rabbits, and Cauth cloaked and kilted for her cross-country walk, and back again to the kindly countenance of his Colleen dhas. He smiled, and then sighed and frowned a little; sighed again, and then again took up his paper and his paragraph.

In due time, the rabbits appeared on the table at Scrowthea, in the kitchen where the family had been used to dine on working-days, and had, of late days, done again by John's desire.

"I thought I told you!—" John said, looking from the savoury dish to Mary.

"My mother sent them," whispered Mary. "I suppose," she added, blushing, "she didn't know Billix called here himself. I thought it better to do 'em to-day, for you know they wouldn't keep till Saturday."

The reason could not be gain-said; and yet John looked into the well-spiced soup, and with the point of the fork turned, this way and that, the several pieces of the white, firm, nicely-cooked flesh, with a dog-in-the-manger-like expression of countenance. Finally, as he could not just then forbid anyone else to partake of them, he helped his father-in-law to not too much; and was fain to enjoy, though as ruminating rather than eating-wise, his own fair share.

Not in the days of the wise man only was it true that "the life of him that looketh to another's table is not worthy to be accounted life!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

At length the storm burst ; rudely and roughly as such storms burst in such a sphere. It seemed, indeed, that John had been but waiting an opportunity of getting into a passion high enough to carry with it to himself and others, some excuse for what he had made up his mind to do. Displeased, then, one afternoon, at some forgetfulness concerning the cow-house, he broke into the dwelling-house violently, abusing, as he came, the boy who was in fault, "the girls, that didn't watch him, an' the mistriss that let things go any way.

"An'—as if that wasn't enough," he said, "we must have a gentleman in the corner! Doing nothing whin he's in, an' less whin he's out. Ridin', why! nothing else 'ould sarve him; ridin' all over the counthry, an' the people talkin' iv it, an' a poor man at home working his life out, an' an'—"

"But, John," interposed Mary, mildly, "sure, afther all, *that* costs us nothing."

"See, woman!" he said, "I won't have it so. An' the less you say about it the better for yourself, may be. But settle it, you, with your father; if you don't want to have me settle with him."

Poor Mary sighed heavily, then turned again to her work. But, after a while, tears dropped upon her hands, and she shook them off.

"I wonder if you'd cry as much for me?" John said brutally; feeling himself now so deeply in the wrong, he needs must go farther to keep his footing. "Did you hear me that time?"

"I did, indeed," Mary said.

"Well, heed me, thin! Let me see no more o' this work goin' on. Egor, wan'ould think 'twas a thousand a year the man had coming in to him—no less!"

Lest longer discourse might lessen the advantage gained so far, he now walked out again, slamming the back door by way of period to his closing speech, and appeared no more till dinner was ready and all seated to it waiting for him.

Meantime, and when he was fairly gone, Mary sat down and cried her fill, unseen. Upon this moot point she could not go to Connor. "What could she ask him to do?" John was to be swayed by no argument that did not tell in money, or money's worth; that she well knew, and so did Connor too. And then, "as long as he didn't ill-thrait herself, what could she say to any wan that 'ouldn't answer her that she ought to think iv her husband before such a father as he was to her? 'Twas hard to blame a man like John, up airly an' late, working hard, though it wasn't for him he was working, to be sure; an' when everything was looked into, 'twasn't much exthra that he cost 'em. But, after all, it was bettther for him to be 'ithout a horse to ride, than 'ithout a house an' home, may be." Yet, how to break it to him? His being a gentleman, even though but a broken down one, made it so very difficult to do.

Fortunately, as to the mere awkwardness of the

affair, Mr. Garland, on returning indoors, felt, or found out, somewhat of the true state of things. John was in a mood that most naturally followed his announcement; at once surly and civil; resolved, but resting on other shoulders the carrying out of his determination. He ate and spoke by snatches. His talk was mainly of people who had "made a sighth o' money!" or, of how, when, and where money had been, or might be made; and, emphatically, of "what a crying shame it was to let money lie in anything a man could do 'ithout, whin there was so many things a man might do with a little iv it!"

Poor old Dick, though feeling this directed at himself, did not at first divine at what precise point it was aimed; or would not, while yet it might be helped, reflect on it. The evening wore off gloomily; the gloom after a storm that only comes between it and another.

Morning came, and nothing lightened it. Noon, and—John out—the Squire rose and moved doubtfully towards the door, the back door, which led to the short-cut to Connor's.

"Is it going out you are, Sir?" asked Mary, who had been in and out, through this doorway, hovering round him, and her painful task, during an hour before.

"It was, Mary," he said.

He looked at her, and understood fully what she could not bring herself to say "out o' the full o' the mouth." The poor man's heart closed around his last lingering pleasure—sad though it often might be also. His once tenacious will held strongly to it for a moment. But he felt the

necessity of giving way. He felt, too, at last, but not unlovingly, for his daughter's share in the sacrifice.

"May be I had better not?" he said, queryingly.

"You might as well not to mind it, for to-day, sir," Mary answered, lingering over the last delusive word.

"Very well," he said. "Anything for a quiet life, child."

Relieved at seeing him take it so far from very ill, Mary cheered up a little; and her cheerfulness cheered the poor soul himself, somewhat.

John, when he returned at dinner time, found, of course, that his orders had been submitted to; and he, too, grew cheerful. Not overmuch, though; he checked himself now and then, and looked black enough, lest his change of humour might give to suppose a reversal of his decree. So that, on the whole, there was a good deal of constraint over the little party. John, sensible of this, felt before bed-hour his assumed sullenness grow real. Moreover, he still had upon his mind the future disposal of the horse; and not even to his wife could he venture to speak openly his views as to that.

Next day, and next, came and went, and old Dick stayed indoors, deeming it safer not even to walk over to talk to Connor on the subject, till matters should be more comfortable at Scrowthea. But, on the fourth day, and, taking the precaution of going out at so late an hour, that John hardly could suspect him of meaning to go a riding, he went, and found Connor very much as

usual, on the farm, and, as he himself described it, "working a spell and resting a spell, wherever little things wanted a han's turn not too hard for an old man like him."

"Well, sir," he said, "we didn't see you these three or four days. 'Twasn't anything ailed you, though, I hear."

"No, Connor, thank you. But I've been thinking of riding no more for the winter, at least."

"Why?" said Connor; "sure 'tis in winter—" He stopped short on catching the expression of old Dick's countenance, half-averted as it was. "P-h-eu!" he continued, softly to himself. Then a long pause ensued, during which Connor worked very hard at the uprooting of an old thistle, that previously he had been content with beheading, "with a spade left just convanient."

"Well, sir," he at length said, "I dare say you know best. But the mare 'll be here for you, whinever you have a mind to him."

"Perhaps you may as well dispose of him?" said the Squire.

"Sure she was your own, sir."

"Mine to ride, through your kindness, Connor; but not mine to dispose of. Pity to have her idle, you know."

"Well, I won't say that, sir, for awhile; who knows but you'll ride again, an', in the main time, I can give her a little schooling off an' on meself," Connor said, slowly and distinctly. "Dickens a wan iv her four feet 'ill ever cross your stable-door, John Meany, if 'tis that you're at; an' I'm a'most sure it is," he went on to himself. Connor had

long since grown too thoughtfully pious to say "divil a wan," except, perhaps, in his very hottest haste. He sometimes even gently rebuked his Colleen dhas for a slip o' the tongue that he knew she didn't main.

The two men now walked over the land to pass away the time and the topic. But their minds equally were on the same theme, and both talked rather disjointedly. At last Connor saw Mr. Garland to the bound's ditch, where a gap gave him free access to his son-in-law's ground; there they parted, Connor renewing his former expression, "that his honour knew where to find the mare. Or whinever he'd want her next, if he didn't like walking over, sure—"

"Oh, dear, no, Connor," interrupted old Dick, hastily. "No, no, Connor, many thanks! If I ever ride her again, I hope I shall be able to walk to her."

Perhaps the Squire was in part disappointed that this conversation had not elicited from Connor a direct gift of the mare as a grace-offering to John. But, beyond all doubt, John was sorely and surlily so. He had expected that "ould Dick 'ould make his own iv her and bring her over," if not quite as a matter of course, at least as "a thing that a man that was living on another oughtn't make any bones of." But Dick had a certain sense of the fitness of things, which gentle association, and some early lessons, had engrained upon a selfish character, and which yet was sufficient to forbid his making a direct attempt at such an imposition upon Connor. And so matters

rested. If they could be said to rest whilst progressing towards increased disquietude.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

If ever, during the passage of those troublous times, Mr. Garland recurred to the overtures made to him through Billix, he kept his own secret. It may be that knowledge of the world grew with his experience, and made him aware that if he cast his lot with strangers, it might give him a position no less painful, and but less permanent than the one he held. He had grown used to the framework of people and things which now surrounded him; and even where it irked him, it gave him but an accustomed pain. In short, "he knew where he was, and he didn't know where he might be:" Billix's analysis of his reply, served then and after to represent his state of mind. Besides he had aged more than proportionately to his years, and age cleaves to security, to sameness, even. In youth, the cry of the heart is, "Where-to tomorrow?" In any company, respectable or otherwise, "who cares?" In any vehicle, so long as it bowls along the road of life. With much or little means, change is change, and seems of necessity to be a pleasure. But age, it grieves age to feel that the same old post it sees to-day, it will not see again to-morrow and the day after. Moreover, the Squire had come really, if tardily, to love the Girleen. His

old hardness of character had come of an undisciplined exercise of power, and an uncurbed self-indulgence, rather than of any innate cruelty or malice. And, now the ties of blood, of habit, of dependance, even, inclined him towards his one only child. When she endured a rebuff for him, he actually suffered for her more than she could imagine, or perhaps believe, had he expressed it. This he did not. Fearful of any such like show of feeling being doubted or deemed hypocritical, he kept the best part of his feelings to himself. And thus, the best means of influencing permanently John's feelings and demeanour by his own, were denied the unhappy man by the hardest judge of all his own immitigable past.

Pauses there were, however, merciful pauses, in the water-droppings of unquiet on this poor ill-sheltered head. Sometimes the sound castigation that Father Davis loved occasionally to administer to his homely congregation, sent John home subdued, though sombre; and if all went well with his humour out-of-doors, it was good Sunday, good week to all within. Immediately before and after the half-yearly station, too, there came a great peace upon the household.

"Mild as milk he is to-day morning!" Billix, on some one of those occasions, said to Cauth, who happened to be at Scrowthea. "Whin I see him sitch a good boy, it made me think o' going to me juty meself, so it did!"

To which Cauth replied,—

"But, thinking an' doing, you know, Billix—"

"Wisha, that's the way to say it, I'm afraid. Well, the Lord 'ill give us a long day, may be."

"An' may be no?"

"Yerra, don't be croakin' for us!" cried Billix. "Save your own soul, an' pray for your neighbours'. See, now that's as good av advice as if Father Davis gev' it, though may be you won't think so. If you're goin' to take a twist at praiching, Cauthileen, my heart, keep him (pointing over his shoulder) good for us."

"He's good an' he's bad, Billix, like the praties."

"Well," Billix said, "bad as I am, an' bad I am, I admit in some respects, I had an ould mother at home in the corner twenty years an' more, an' I never sence the day I was born, said worse than ma'am to her; dhrunk or sober, full or fasting; an' she'd tell the same story herself of her boy, Billix, if she was to the fore—God rest her."

"Oh, say so!" said Cauth. "Well, Billix, that's a good thing."

"Betther than you'd think o' me, may be?"

"Sure, 'tisen't after walking out from the priest you'd have me give rash judgment again me neighbour? Ask me to-morrow."

"You're a rogue," returned Billix; "an' priest nor ministher 'wouldn't make anything else o' you. But wan thing I tell you, it wouldn't be a bad thing for *somebody we know*, if ye had a station here every day."

"Yerra, thin?" said Cauth. "But you should put your hand in your pocket for that, Billix."

"That's the way to say it *a-colleen* !

'High Mass for high money,
Low Mass for low money,
An' no Mass for no money.'

"That's your sort, Billix, as you say yourself," returned Cauth. "It's aisily known. 'Tis the bla'guards o' the parish 'ould make saints all out the priests. I wish they were hearing to you!"

"If they wor' itself they know there's no great harum in me. An' for all, let me see *wan o' the right sorte*,* that 'll say the black word agin' 'em—"

"Iss; go fight for 'em now!"

"Well, I'll go at any rate, why? Good bye to you, Cauth."

"Safe home to you, Billix!"

Billix's observation was exactly true. These occasions did John a world of good, but only for a time. As, though he was passingly almost kind to the Squire, even going so far as to rebuke Mary for some small neglect of her father, which awe of him (John) had made customary, the gracious influence was let pass away; and the old Adam of an ungenial and untempered clay too soon and too plainly showed hard and cold again.

* An Orangeman.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

How matters might have thriven when summer came again can only be conjectured ; for Connor, under whose influence John lay somewhat, began to ail slowly of one of the many maladies that country folk call "a pain in the heart." This he complained of in that honest kindly heart in which, but that God is over all, one would say there ought never come a pain. The nearest dispensary doctor was called in, and attended on him during a while. Then a physician of repute from Farrenstown was brought many times to see him. In vain. The ailment was either beyond their knowledge or beyond their art ; for Connor drooped and drooped until he died.

He put his affairs in order, like an honest conscientious Christian. Rumour said that John Meany expected to be left all after the widow's death, or, "at the very laist something handsome." If so, like many large expectants, great in proportion was his disappointment. Connor, face to face with conscience, felt then that Mary had no natural God-given claim upon him, that he had "done well for her already in securing her good mains of her own." And so, saving the best part of his love—next to his wife's, which indeed he could not well take from her—he left the Girleen nothing. He "had wance in a way," he said to his poor weeping Colleen dhas, "a notion

o' laiving her a thrifle, if 'twas on'y for the sake o' that poor father of hers. But," he continued, "it was all well while I was here to the fore an' could see 'em all meself; but now I couldn't put a hand to my conscience an' give to a stranger what I dun' know but my own may sorely want. Have an eye after him, Johanna, if it is a thing you stay here."

"Oh Connor, Connor, don't talk o' laiving me! Sure you wouldn't, sure you wouldn't."

"Johanna, my heart," said Connor softly, "you were always good,—ever an' always, asthore machree—an' sure you wouldn't tempt me now to fly in the face of God? mo Colleen dhas, an' 'tis I that wouldn't if I could. Did I ever laive you when I could help it?"

"Oh, but there's no use in giving up," cried Johanna, "God is good."

"I hope I won't go till 'tis plaising to Him. But I'd like be ready."

Connor died in the night-time, while in a city the hour would yet be called the evening. One of those full soft summer nights that he had been used to linger with around his cottage door—leaning by the latch and turning in to talk to his Johanna—his spirit "went forth as soft air."

His decline had been so gradual that the end came unawares. No one beside the family was in the house; and Johanna sternly forbade Cauth to call up the neighbours, or "to bring in a wake on her." It wouldn't be long that she could have him with her now. No wan need grudge him to her all alone for that night." And so Cauth only

shared her watch ; and a befitting quiet rested on the house till morning.

The servant boys and girls gathered in the kitchen. And when the water to wash the corpse was taken to the room by Cauth, the others drew around the hearth and made up a rousing fire to warm away the chilliness that enters every dwelling-house with death. In low tones they talked of Connor, and of "what *herself* 'ould do 'ithout him at all, at all." Each one told some story "to show the goodness he had in him to the backbone ;" or "the feel he had in him for thim that *wanted*, beyand all they ever knew ;" or "the dhroll way he had iv his own iv saying an' doing everything a'most."

Mary was at home at Scrowthea. She was not herself in rude health at the time ; and from the first neither Connor nor Johanna would allow of her sitting up two nights "running." On this one, then, she had gone home and to bed early, "to be sthrong again the next." In the morning she was taking her cloak down from its peg, "to go across an' see how he was afther the night," when John reentered hastily, and laid his hand detainingly upon her.

"'Tis as good for you not to mind it awhile," he said, glancing from her to Mr. Garland, who, just arisen, was entering the kitchen, also anxious for the morning's news of Connor. Both understood him.

"An'—oh God, forgive me !" murmured Mary, after the first speechless burst of grief. "I hadn't him in me thoughts as I ought to have him lately. Me head was full of what maybe I

hadn't as good a right to think of. An' now I saw the last iv him. Oh father, father!"

This name she exclaimed aloud. Mr. Garland involuntarily turned towards her, though she hardly ever called him so, almost always "Sir." But he turned back again quickly, and went into his room and closed the door. Sad, though not spiritual enough to bring the benefit with the bitterness of such a sting, were his feelings as he sat down upon his bedside, and woman-like clasped his hands together. Taken with John's continued and not decreasing crustiness, Mary's absorbing grief (that he could not blame nor love her the less for) made him suffer sorely. In the sporting phrase that came into his head, as if in mockery, "it left him nowhere."

Thenceforward indeed, the first wild grief subdued, the Girleen did not neglect her duty towards him. In all things she did as well as circumstances would permit, she thought. If this well might at times be better, it were hard to blame her. So placed as she was, her duty did not always seem quite clear to her. When she had to make a choice between pleasing her husband and her father, it was to her but a choice of pains and penalties. Her courage often sank. In her own strong simple words, "she had lost her back" in Connor.

After the first burst of their common grief was stilled, and everyday matters called on both again, the Girleen and the Colleen dhas were put apart somewhat by Connor's death. When they met, it was as mother and daughter. But after awhile they met comparatively seldom. A widowed sister

and her son came from a distance to live at Currahaly with Johanna. To Mary they were strangers; and to them she was an interloper; one who already had got too much, and was by no means to be encouraged to come in the way of getting more. Absorbed in her grief too deeply to observe passing things as shrewdly as of old, Johanna rarely or but slightly noted the cold looks or over-civil words that made the Girleen feel herself a stranger in the house that she was reared in, and which made her resolve "to throuble 'em as little as possible." And perhaps, too, the drawing nearer of her own people brought home to Johanna that deeply-seated Irish feeling that almost under any circumstances holds that "blood is thicker than water," so far as to prevent her considering as a grievance to the Girleen, any change in the relation in which they had stood one to the other.

When able to follow her neighbours' good advice, "to rouse herself an' see afther her business," Johanna's liveliest motive seemed to be the wish to make her own life-interest in the farm to bring as much as possible for the benefit of her nephew. She could not, indeed, think as constantly as she did of Connor, and not occasionally call to mind "the wish he had" for Mr. Garland. This recollection appeared from time to time in many shapes at Scrowthea. But it may be that her gifts were not altogether benefits. No longer permitted even to hope for any bequest of much moment, and feeling that what he did get, was not in compliment to himself, John Meany was, perhaps, as much irritated as propitiated by

Cauth's appearance, now and then, her basket in her hand, or the tail of her cloak spread out wide by the something carried under it. Certain it is, that Billix, if by at the acceptance of such present, would say that "he took it as a dog would take a bone."

The boys no longer called, as of course, upon their way home from school, or went for a holiday or a week's petting, when "very bad with a pain in their school-bag," to Currahaly. Mary felt a delicacy as to often sending them, even for a passing call; and her tacit objection was actively seconded by the arch ingenuity of little Connor. He was fond enough of his grandmother, and sorry in his way, for his grandfather, too, but not sufficiently of either to reconcile him to being kissed and cried over for his name's sake. If the customary cake were half a dozen, or the penny two, he would have thought them hardly earned so. Jerry went more willingly; but Jerry's visits were not always purely promotive of the family interest. Nor was Connor, going against his will when John enjoined it, much more likely to be bade to come soon again. Insensibly, and, as it appeared, unavoidably, the intercourse lapsed to formal Sunday visits; during which, while the Girleen was most hospitably made a stranger of by Johanna's sister, the children were cross-questioned by Johanna's sister's son. Thus, the influence that would naturally have kept Mary in her place as daughter of the house, was, it would seem, as naturally lost.

CHAPTER XL.

One evening, of the second summer after Connor's death, such another evening as that on which he died, a group, and Billix one of them, were gathered, some seated, some standing, in and round a doorway, at a spot between Currahaly and Farrenstown, where several houses stood closer than is common in that district, and formed, what in Scotland would be called a town. Gossip, turning on many topics and on many people, crossed the country like a hare, till it rested at Cuilraike.

"There's great doings there, lately, I hear," said one.

"Great doings intirely," said another.

"There is, an' there isn't," said Billix, significantly.

"I believe so," said a fourth speaker. "I'm told, for I had no dailing with him, that the new man 'ill look as hard at a penny before he parts it as ever the ould man did in his most *nagurly* days."

"You wor told something near the truth," Billix said.

"You ought to know, Billix."

"I know where the outside o' the kitchen door is."

"Yerra, is that the way with you?"

"We all know that," one of the women said, laughing.

"Why thin the dickens a much more you'll know, Betty, while he's there," rejoined Billix.

"There he'll be, thin. All that talk there was about the place was all moonshine."

"I hear that sorte o' talk about a great many estates in me time," said an old man, "but I never see anything come iv it. They didn't change han's agin. 'Possession is eleven points o' the law.'"

"An' an Incumbered Estates Coort title is good agin the world."

"I wish some of uz had it to a bit iv a sod, if it was only to thry," said another, smiling.

"I was comin' down be that big meadow o' Meany's ere-istherday," said a young man, who just had joined the group, "an' who should I see but the ould Squire, poor old Dick, sittin' be the sthraim undher the salleys, an' cryin'—sheddin' down salt tears!"

"Wisha, God help him!" exclaimed one of the women.

"An' what ailded him?" asked another.

"What would ail him but somethin' that black *bodach* iv a son-in-law iv his said or done to him?" put in Billix. "What else! Little the likes iv him thought, wance upon a time, iv ever bein' married to a gentleman's daughter."

"Good enough for her, an' too good for her he was," said one of the seniors.

"Iss, if he was good."

"That's the way to say it, boy!" cried Billix, clapping the last speaker on the shoulder. "But

he isn't, I tell you, good nor gracious; but a poor *sprissawn* iv a thing that hasn't the heart iv a weasel."

"Why, thin, now you're talking!" said another. "But, I tell you, Billix, putting everything together, 'twasn't bad iv him to take the ould man into his house or place at all. An' I'm told 'twas he come over to it first."

"Yerra!" said Billix, "there are some min that haven't the sperit to refuse, an' still they haven't the heart to give. Whin a man does a thing, he might as well, an' betther, I say, do it with a good grace, an' let a body be obliged to him."

"Well, that's his own affair."

"'Tis, an' my affair, if I was the person he'd be giving it to. I rather a man 'ould say 'no' to me out o' the full o' the mouth, than give me a thing in that shilly-shally, over-an'-bether, I will-an'-I-won't, sort iv a way," pursued Billix, as he slowly moved off.

"Billix's share o' the world come aisy to him," observed one of the party, with a laugh.

"Ould Dick," repeated another, thoughtfully, "why, thin, he's not so ould afther all."

"Ould!" said Billix, turning back; "he's a young man, a'most. But there's a great change come in him. He looks twinty years oulder than he is this day. May be John Meany 'on't look betther himself whin it comes to his turn. Look at me! Iss, I like the ould stock! An' let thim that are putting the hump on him, look afther themselves."

Poor Dick did not live long after this. But

he left behind him nobody who thoroughly regretted him. John Meany regarded him as a load upon him, all the greater for being very greatly magnified by his own small-mindedness. Mary shed some tears. Yet, perhaps, when she had laid down her side of the burden with some regret, and with some remorse, (for what relation in life closes without leaving some to the survivors?) perhaps even she confessed that, all things considered, she could not "from the heart out" wish to have it taken up and laid on her again.

In his death-sickness, Mr. Garland declined to see his minister. And Mary feared to bring him the priest. At last, yet more fearful of seeing him "die like a dog," as she shuddered at saying to herself, she did send for one of the curates. Dick answered the priest's query, "Did you desire to see me?" with a polite negative. Perhaps this effort to receive a stranger hurried him to that world where all was strange to him. The priest hardly had quitted the house when the soul departed too.

So died poor Squire Garland. But his son-in-law gave him a fine funeral. More than might have gratified the poor old man's personal needs or desires through months was squandered over his remains.

"*'Sic transit gloria Mundi!'*" said Jerry and Connor's school-master, lighting his pipe as he sat beside "the elegant coffin." Puffing away, he read :

" 'Richd. Garland,

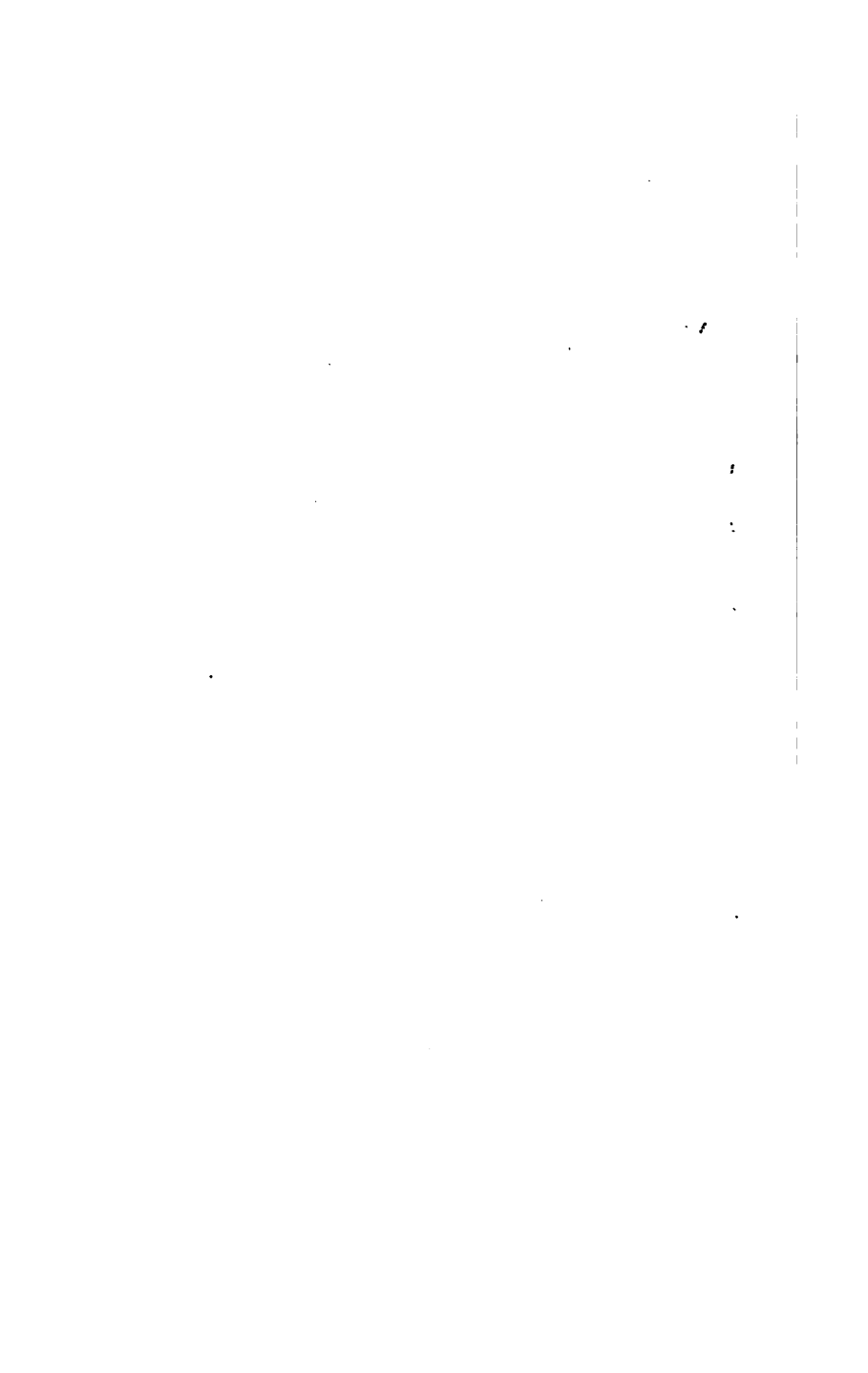
Aged 65.'

They might have taken the throuble to mark his name in full," he added, taking out his pipe to speak.

A fortnight later, the county Conservative paper, in its obituary, summed up this history :

"On the 29th ult., at the residence of his son-in-law, Richard Garland, formerly of Cuilraike, Esq., many years a magistrate of this county."

THE END.



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